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VOL. I.

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HISTORY OF CHARLES XII

BY

M. DE VOLTAIRE

WITH

A LIFE OF VOLTAIRE

BY LORD BROUGHAM

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CRITICAL NOTICES

BY LORD MACAULAY AND THOMAS CARLYLE

EDITED BY

O. W. WIGHT, A. M.

BOSTON
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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

This volume contains: 1st, "Life of Voltaire," by Lord Brougham; 2, "Voltaire and Frederick the Great," by Lord Macaulay; 3d, "Voltaire and the Church," also by Lord Macaulay; 4th, "Character and Genius of Voltaire," by Carlyle; and 5th, Voltaire's "History of Charles XII."

We have used Lord Brougham's Life of Voltaire, for the simple reason that we could not find a better one sufficiently brief for our purpose. It opens with one of those special pleadings, in which Lord Brougham is so distinguished a master. Voltaire, he argues, in making Revelation the subject of mockery, was not to blame, because he had no belief in what he ridiculed. There is a clear distinction to be made between conscious and unconscious transgression, but nothing is falser than the conclusion that unconscious transgression is no transgression at all. He who takes poison without knowing it, is not guilty of suicide; nevertheless he dies self-destroyed: the Author of his nature virtually says to him, "I gave you intelligence sufficient for your preservation; if you have failed to use it, you must abide the consequences." So Lord Brougham's special pleading to have Voltaire acquitted of the charge of blasphemy, means simply this—inasmuch as he did not commit the sin knowingly, he committed no sin at all. This is the only point in regard to which it is necessary to forewarn the reader. To several other judgments of Lord Brougham upon Voltaire and certain of his works, we have also taken exceptions, but we have stated the grounds of these exceptions in foot-notes, and need not dwell upon them here. We have

also supplied (in foot-notes drawn from various sources) many defects, and corrected several marvellous blunders. Yet this Life of Voltaire, taken as a whole, is able: with our annotations we believe it to be far the best and most trustworthy in the English language.

An extract from Lord Macaulay's splendid article on Frederick the Great, which we have entitled, "Voltaire and Frederick the Great," shows, in a brilliant narrative, the relation sustained to each other by the king-*philosophe* of Ferney and the *philosophe*-king of Prussia. It is an important chapter in Voltaire's life, and indicates the manner in which the biography of the mad mocker, who made all intellectual Europe dance, should be written. The field is still open for a man of sound judgment, ample knowledge, and literary skill.

"Voltaire and the Church" is an extract from Macaulay's article on Ranke's History of the Popes. Our object in introducing it has been to indicate the opinions and feelings of Voltaire in regard to Christianity. No one will accuse Macaulay of religious bigotry, and his judgment upon this important point may be safely accepted.

We have also inserted most of Carlyle's famous article on Voltaire, entitling it the "Character and Genius of Voltaire." It is a masterpiece of spiritual portraiture, and, from Mr. Carlyle's point of view, most just. For him the great *persifleur* is no hero, and, consequently no object of worship. In nowise can he reckon the disbelieving apostle of Ferney among those men,—the Luthers, Mahomets, Cromwells, and Dantes,—who are, "far more than any Alps or Coliseums, the true world-wonders, which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint forever on our remembrance." The lover of Madame du Châtelet and the flatterer of Frederick the Great, is not, for him, one of those men that are "Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind; that stand as heavenly Signs, ever-living witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, imbodied Possibilities of human nature; which greatness he who has never seen, or rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is

himself forever doomed to be little." While, therefore, he is wholly free from any of the current vulgar prejudices, he judges Voltaire with severity, although with honest and labo rious endeavor to be just.

We think that the pieces here brought together, by three great British writers, who are free from the ordinary prejudices of their countrymen against Voltaire, wholly free from the prejudices of Frenchmen in his favor, afford the reader ample aid for forming a correct judgment of the leading *littérateur* of the eighteenth century.

The main portion of the volume is Voltaire's "History of Charles XII." It is known wherever literature is known, and little need be said of it here. Even as severe a critic as Carlyle speaks of it thus: "The clearest details are given in the fewest words; we have sketches of strange men and strange countries, of wars, adventures, negotiations, in a style which, for graphic brevity, rivals that of Sallust." We have used the translation made by Dr. Smollet and others, printed in London, 1762; diligently comparing it with the original and revising it throughout. The orthography of geographical and other names is the only thing that has given us any real trouble. To have retained the orthography of Voltaire would have been only perpetuating error to save ourselves trouble—precisely what editors and translators of "Charles XII" have hitherto done. So if any one wishes an edition in which he may find Couk for Cook (an English merchant), Areskine for Erskine (the Scotch physician of Peter the Great), Parts for Bartsch (a river of Poland), Schullembourg for Schulenburg (the Gernan mareschal), Levenhaupt for Löwenhaupt, Alt-Ranstadt for Altranstädt, Altena for Altona, Astracan for Astrakhan, Palus Mæotis for Sea of Azof, Czarefils for Czarevitch, Borysthenes for Dnieper, Tanais for Don, Duina for Düna, Frauenstadt for Fraustadt, Frederichshall for Frederickshald, Gortz for Görtz, Hollosin for Holowczyn, Kulbert (changed by Voltaire's French editors) for Kaulbar, Cam for Khan, Colo for Kolo, Konigsmark for Königsmark, Leopol for Lemberg, Leczinski for Leszczynski, Basha for Pasha, Pennamonder for Peenemunde,

Precop for Perecop, Pultesh for Pultusk, Reuschild for Rehnskiöld (we have met with nine different orthographies), Rysvich for Ryswyk, Stetin for Stettin, Tistedal for Tistedaelf, Valstein for Wallenstein, Upsal for Upsala, Zaporaviens for Zaporogues, etc., etc., etc., he must seek it elsewhere. We have used all diligence and care to make our edition accurate in this respect. It is quite possible, nay probable, that some errors have escaped us, that, in one or two instances, a wrong form may have been adopted. In regard to many words, we have found the highest authorities differing, and, having no alternative, have been obliged to decide where doctors disagree. If any critic will pile up around him three or four hundred volumes of gazetteers, cyclopædias, encyclopædias, and standard histories, search in a dozen or more authoritative works for the orthography of a single name, as we have done, and then correct us on any point, *according to knowledge*, we will reward his zeal with thanks and gratitude.

We have used every endeavor to perfect the fine old translation of Charles XII, and can but wish that many a reader may find as much pleasure in perusing it as we have found in editing it.

O. W. WIGHT.

APRIL, 1859.

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LIFE OF VOLTAIRE,

BY LORD BROUGHAM.

THIS name is so intimately connected in the minds of all men with infidelity, in the minds of most men with irreligion, and, in the minds of all who are not well informed, with these qualities alone, that whoever undertakes to write his life and examine his claims to the vast reputation which all the hostile feelings excited by him against himself have never been able to destroy, or even materially to impair, has to labor under a great load of prejudice, and can hardly expect, by any detail of particulars, to obtain for his subject even common justice at the hands of the general reader. It becomes, therefore, necessary, in the outset, to remove a good deal of misunderstanding which, from the popular abuse of language, creates great confusion, in considering the history and weighing the merits of this extraordinary person.

The mention of Voltaire at once presents to every one the idea, not so much of a philosopher whose early inquiries have led him to doubt upon the foundations of religion, or even to disbelieve its truths, as of a bitter enemy to all belief in the evidence of things unseen—an enemy whose assaults were directed by malignant passions, aided by unscrupulous contrivances, and, above all, pressed by the unlawful weapon of ridicule, not the fair armory of argument; in a word, he is regarded as a scoffer, not a reasoner. Akin to this is the other charge which makes us shudder by the imputation of blasphemy. Now, upon this manner of viewing Voltaire some things

are to be explained, and some to be recalled, that they may be borne in mind during the discussion of his character.

Let us begin with the last charge, because, until it is removed, no attention is likely to be gained by any thing that can be urged in defence or in extenuation. It is evident that, strictly speaking, blasphemy can only be committed by a person who believes in the existence and in the attributes of the Deity whom he impugns, either by ridicule or by reasoning. An atheist is wholly incapable of the crime. When he heaps epithets of abuse on the Creator, or turns his attributes into ridicule, he is assailing or scoffing at an empty name—at a being whom he believes to have no existence. In like manner if a deist, one who disbelieves in our Saviour being either the Son of God or sent by God as his prophet upon earth, shall argue against his miracles, or ridicule his mission or his person, he commits no blasphemy; for he firmly believes that Christ was a man like himself, and that he derived no authority from the Deity. Both the atheist and the deist are free from all guilt of blasphemy, that is, of all guilt towards the Deity or towards Christ. It is wholly another question whether or not they are guilty towards men. They plainly are so if they use topics calculated to wound the feelings of their neighbor who believes what they disbelieve; because religion, unlike other subjects of controversy, is one that mixes itself with the strongest feelings of the heart, and these must not be rudely outraged; because no man can be so perfectly certain that he is himself right and others are wrong, as to justify him in thus making their opinions the subject of insolent laughter or scurrilous abuse; because it is our duty, even when fully convinced that we are dealing with error, and with dangerous error, to adopt such a course as will rather conciliate those we would gain over to the truth than make them shut their eyes to it by revolting their strongest feelings. Hence all lawgivers have regarded such scoffing and insolent attacks on the religion professed by the great majority of their subjects as an offence justly punishable; although it may fairly be doubted whether the interposition of the law has ever had a tendency to protect

religious belief itself, and it may even be suspected of having favored the designs of those who impugn it, both by the reaction which such proceedings always occasion, and by the more cautious and successful methods of attack to which they usually drive the opponents of the national faith. But the offence, whether punished by the laws or not, is very incorrectly, though very generally, termed blasphemy, which is the offence of scoffing at the Deity, and assumes that the scoffer believes in him. Now it is barely possible that this offence may be committed: but it is the act of a mad rather than a bad man. If, indeed, any one really believing pretends to unbelief in order to indulge in scoffing, no language is too strong to express the reprobation he deserves, if he be in his senses; for he adds falsehood to a crime so horrible as almost to pass the bounds of belief—the frightful act of wilfully rebelling against the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. This is the *first* and worst form of the offence.

Secondly: The like guilt will, to a certain extent, be incurred by him who vents his ribaldry, upon the mere ground of his skepticism. On such a subject doubting is not enough. Unless there is an entire conviction in the mind that the popular belief is utterly groundless in the one case (that of attacking the Deity) that there is a God, in the other (attacking Christianity) that there is a foundation for revelation, the guilt of blasphemy is incurred. He must be convinced, not merely doubt, or see reason for doubting; because no one has a right to speculate and take the chances of being innocent; guiltless if his doubts are well founded, guilty if they are not. The virtuous course here is the safe one. This is the moral of the fable in which the hermit answers the question of the rake, "Where are you, father, if there be not another world?" with the other question, "And you, my son, if there be?" We need not go so far as some have done, who on this ground contend that it is safer always to believe than to doubt, because belief must ever, to be of any value, depend on conviction. But we may assuredly hold that the better conduct is that which abstains from attack and offence, where the reasons

hang in suspense—abstains because of the great guilt incurred if the doubts should prove groundless.

It is a *third* and lesser degree of this offence if a person carelessly gives way to a prevailing unbelief, and does not apply his faculties to the inquiry with that sober attention, that conscientious diligence, which its immense importance demands of all rational creatures. No man is accountable for the opinion he may form, the conclusion at which he may arrive, provided that he has taken due pains to inform his mind and fix his judgment. But for the conduct of his understanding he certainly is responsible. He does more than err if he proceeds negligently in the inquiry; he does more than err if he allows any motive to sway his mind, save the constant and single desire of finding the truth; he does more than err if he suffers the least influence of temper or of weak feeling to warp his iudgment; he does more than err if he listens rather to ridicule than reason, unless it be that ridicule which springs from the contemplation of gross and manifest absurdity, and which is in truth argument and not ribaldry.

Now by these plain rules we must try Voltaire; and it is impossible to deny that he possessed such sufficient information, and applied his mind with such sufficient anxiety to the discovery of truth, as gave him a right to say that he had formed his opinions, how erroneous soever they might be, after inquiring, and not lightly. The story which is related of the Master in the Jesuits' Seminary of Louis le Grand, where he was educated, having foretold that he would be the Corypheus of deists, if true, only proves that he had very early begun to think for himself; and whoever doubted the real presence, or questioned the power of absolution, was at once set down for an infidel in those countries and in those times. It would be the fate of any young scholar in the Roman colleges at this day, especially were he to maintain his doubts with a show of cleverness; and were he to mingle the least wit with his argument, he would straightway be charged with blasphemy. But 't must be added that an impression unfavorable to the truths of religion, and its uses, was made upon Voltaire's mind by

the sight of its abuses, and by a consideration of the manifest errors inculcated in the Romish system. It is not enough to bring him within the blame above stated under the third head, that he was prejudiced in conducting his inquiries, if that prejudice proceeded from the errors of others which he had unjustly been summoned to believe. He is not to be blamed for having begun to doubt of the truths of Christianity in consequence of his attention having originally been directed to the foundations of the system by a view of the falsehoods which had been built upon those truths. Even if the bigotry of priests, the persecutions of sovereigns, the absurdities of a false faith, the grovelling superstitions of its votaries, their sufferings, bodily as well as mental, under false guides and sordid pastors, roused his indignation and his pity, and these alternating emotions which first excited the spirit of inquiry, afterwards too much guided its course, we are not on that account to condemn him as severely as we should one who, from some personal spleen or individual interest, had suffered his judgment to be warped, and thus, as it were, lashed himself into disbelief of a system altogether pure administered by a simple, a disinterested, a venerable hierarchy.

Let us for a moment, independent of what may be termed the political view of the question—independent of all that regards the priesthood—consider the position of a person endowed with strong natural faculties, and not under the absolute dominion of his spiritual guides, nor prevented by their authority from exercising his reason; but, on the contrary, living at a moment when a spirit of free inquiry was beginning generally to prevail. He is told that the mystery of transubstantiation must be believed by him as a fact; he is told that there has been transmitted through a succession of ages from the apostles one of the Divine attributes, the power of pardoning sin, and that the laying a priest's hands on a layman gives him this miraculous power, to be exercised by him how guilty soever may be his own life, how absolutely null his own belief in the Divine being—nay, that this power has come through certain persons notorious atheists themselves, and whose lives

were more scandalously profligate than any thing that a modest tongue can describe. Presented to a vigorous mind, and not enforced by an authority which suffers no reasoning, or if enforced yet vainly so enforced, these dogmas and these claims became the subject of discussion, and were rejected almost as soon as they were understood. But in company with them were found many other doctrines and pretensions of a very different complexion, yet all of them were pronounced to have the same Divine original; and no greater sanctity, no higher authority, no deeper veneration was claimed for them than for the real presence of the Creator at the summons of the priest, or the participation of that priest in the attributes of the Godhead. Let us be just towards the youth who was placed in these circumstances, and let us not condemn him for hastily rejecting the wheat with the chaff, before we endeavor to place ourselves in the same situation, asking what effect would be produced on our minds by severe denunciations against us should we doubt the priest's power, or refuse an explicit assent to his dogmas, which our reason, nay our senses rejected, while he refused all access to the inspired volumes which contained, or were said to contain, their only warrant. Rejecting the false doctrines, the chances are many that our faith would be shaken in the true. How many Protestants were made in the sixteenth century by the sale of indulgences! But how many unbelievers in Christianity have been made in all ages of the Church by the grosser errors of Rome, the exorbitant usurpations of her bishops, and the preposterous claims of her clergy!

It is also to be observed that Voltaire was, through his whole life, a sincere believer in the existence and attributes of the Deity. He was a firm and decided, and an openly declared unbeliever in Christianity, but he was, without any hesitation or any intermission, a theist. Then in examining the justice of the charge of blasphemy, it is to be borne in mind that in all his numberless writings not one irreverent expression is to be found towards the Deity in whom he believed. He has more ably than most writers stated and illustrated the arguments in favor of that belief. He has consecrated some of his

noblest poetry to celebrate the powers of the Godhead.[1] Whatever exception to this assertion may seem to be found in those writings will, on consideration, prove to be only apparent. It will be found that he is speaking only of the Deity as represented in systems of religion which he disbelieved; consequently he is there ridiculing ouly the idols, the work of men's hands, and the objects of superstitious worship, not the great Being in whom he believed and whom he adored. Even his "Candide," one of his greatest, perhaps his most perfect work, is only intended to expose the extravagance of the optimist doctrine; and however we may lament its tone in some sort, it is certainly not chargeable with ridiculing any thing which a philosophic theist must necessarily believe.

But no one can exempt Voltaire from blame for the manner in which he attacked religious opinions, and outraged the feelings of believers. There he is without defence. Had all men been prepared to make the step which he had himself taken, the wound he inflicted would have been inconsiderable. But he must have written with the absolute certainty that their religious belief would long survive his assaults, and that consequently, to the vast majority of readers, they could only give pain. Indeed he must, in the moments of calm reflection, have been aware that reasoning, and not ridicule, is the proper remedy for religious error, and that no one can heartily embrace the infidel side of the great question merely because he has been made to join in a laugh at the expense of absurdities

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[1] His dramatic compositions abound in such religious sentiments, clothed in the noblest language of poetical abstraction; but his celebrated verses, said to have been written extempore in a company that were admiring the firmament one summer's evening, may be placed by the side of the finest compositions in that kind:

"Tous ces vastes pays d'azur et de lumière,
Tirés du sein du vide, formés sans matière,
Arrondis sans compas, tournans sans pivot,
N'ont à peine coûté la dépense d'un mot."

When I once cited these to my illustrious friend Monti, who never would allow any poetical merit to the French, he objected to the last phrase, which he called the *pivot*, as low and prosaic, and as affording a proof of his constant position, that the French have no poetical language.

mixed up with the doctrines of believers; nay, even if he has been drawn into a laugh at the expense of some portion of those doctrines themselves. It is no vindication for Voltaire against this heavy charge, but it may afford some palliation of his offence, if we reflect on the very great difference between the ecclesiastical regimen under which he lived, and that with which we are acquainted in our Protestant community. Let no man severely condemn the untiring zeal of Voltaire, and the various forms of attack which he employed without measure against the religious institutions of his country, who is not prepared to say that he could have kept entire possession of his own temper, and never cast an eye of suspicion upon the substance of a religion thus abused, nor ever have employed against its perversions the weapons of declamation and of mockery; had he lived under the system which regarded Alexander Borgia as one of its spiritual guides, which bred up and maintained in all the riot of criminal excess an aristocracy having for one branch of its resources the spoils of the altar, which practised persecution as a favorite means of conviction, and cast into the flames a lad of eighteen, charged with laughing as its priests passed by. Such dreadful abuses were present to Voltaire's mind when he attacked the Romish superstitions, and exposed the profligacy, as well as the intolerance, of clerical usurpation. He unhappily suffered them to poison his mind upon the whole of that religion of which these were the abuse; and, when his zeal waxed hot against the whole system, it blinded him to the unfairness of the weapons with which he attacked both its evidences and its teachers.

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[1] The celebrated phrase of D'Alembert and Voltaire, "*écrasez l'infâme*," has been generally supposed to apply to Christ. Professor A. De Morgan, in a life of D'Alembert contributed to the *Biographical Dictionary* of the Useful Knowledge Society, has shown that this is a distortion of an adversary's meaning. Southey says: "Is it not probable or rather can any person doubt, that the *écrasez l'infâme*, upon which so horrible a charge against him [Voltaire] has been raised, refers to the Church of Rome, under this well-known designation?"—*Poet's Pilgrimage*, note 22. A French writer in *La Presse*, February 23, 1858, says: "What they did not pardon in him, was the war so glorious that he waged against the *infâme*, that is

The doctrine upon toleration, upon prosecutions for infidelity, even for blasphemy, which I have now ventured to propound, is supported by the very highest authority among persons of the most acknowledged piety, and of the warmest zeal for the interests of religion. It was the constant maxim of my revered friend, Mr. Wilberforce, that no man should be prosecuted for his attacks upon religion. He gave this opinion in Parliament; and he was wont to say, that the ground of it was his belief in the truths of religion. "If religion be, as I believe it, true, it has nothing to fear from any such assaults. But it may be injured by the secular arm interfering." Just so the well-known Duke of Queensberry, when conversing upon the writings of Paine, and other assailants of the constitution, made answer to a sycophant, who said of those attacks, "And so false, too." "No," said his Grace, "not at all: they are true, and that is their danger, and the reason I desire to see them put down by the law; were they false, I should not mind them at all."

In the like spirit we have the unsuspected testimony of men like Dr. Lardner and Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Christians whose piety and virtue, and whose orthodoxy, are beyond all suspicion. "The proper punishment," says Lardner, "of a low, mean, indecent, scurrilous way of writing, seems to be neglect, contempt, scorn, and final indignation." (*Letter to the Bishop of Chester on the Prosecution of Woolston*, 1729.) "Blasphemy," says Taylor, "is *in aliena republica*, a matter of another world. You may as well cure the colic by brushing a man's clothes, or fill a man's belly with a syllogism, as prosecute for blasphemy. Some men have believed it the more as being provoked into a confidence and vexed into a resolution. Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will. But if a man cannot change his opinion when he list, nor ever does heartily or resolutely but when he cannot do otherwise, then to use force may make him a hypocrite, but never to be a

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against fanaticism, intolerance, superstition, and tyranny." Voltaire was unscrupulous in his attacks upon the Church; no wonder the Churchmen were unscrupulous in their own defence.—*Ed.*

right believer; and so, instead of erecting a trophy to God and true religion, we build a monument for the devil." (*Liberty of Prophesying*, s. xiii. 19.) Bishop Warburton says plainly, "he should have been ashamed of even projecting to write in defence of Moses, had he not thought that all infidels had equal liberty to attack him." (*Dedication to the Divine Legation.*)

These things being premised, we may now proceed with more ease and less interruption from controversial topics, to examine the extraordinary history of this eminent person.

He was the son of the Sieur Arouet, a person of respectable family, filling the place of treasurer in the Chamber of Accounts, an exchequer office of considerable emolument.[1] His mother was of a noble family, that of d'Aumart.[2] A small estate possessed by the father was called Voltaire;[3] and the custom in those days being for the younger children of wealthy commoners to take the name of their estate, leaving the family name to the eldest, François Marie, as the younger of two sons, took the name of Voltaire, which on his brother's death many years after he did not change. He was born the 20th[4] of Feb-

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[1] M. Le Pan has shown, from the existing registers of the office, that the situation held by M. Arouet, the father, was a subordinate one. See *Gentlemen's Magazine* for July, 1846, p. 25.—*Ed.*

[2] Her name was Marie-Catharine Daumart, not Marguerite, as Condorcet has it. See note of M. Beuchot to the *Vie de Voltaire*, *ad locum.*—*Ed.*

[3] "Voltaire is the name of a small family estate that belonged to the *mother* of the author of the *Henriade*,—Marie Catherine-Daumart, of a noble family of Poitou." *France Littéraire*, par Quérard, vol. x. p. 276. The name Voltaire is doubtless an anagram of Arouet, L. J. (*Le Jeune*). Thus:

a	*r*	*o*	*u*(*v*)	*e*	*t*	*l*	*j*(*i*)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
v(*u*)	*o*	*l*	*t*	*a*	*i*(*j*)	*r*	*e*
4	3	7	6	1	8	2	5

See *Notes and Queries*, vol. iv. p. 78, and p. 457; and vol. v. p. 17.—*Ed.*

[4] Voltaire himself gives three different dates of his birth. In an article sent by him, in 1755 or in 1756, to the brothers Parfaict, for their Dictionnaire des Théatre de Paris, he says that he was born on the 20th November. In a letter to Damilaville, of February 20, 1765, he speaks of February 20, 1694; in his letter to the King of Prussia, November 25, 1777, he says: "I am *to-day* 80 years of age."

None of these dates is exact. The last has not been adopted, nor even

ruary, 1694; and being so feeble that his life was not expected, he was baptized immediately, the christening being deferred till the 22d of November following. This has given rise to doubts at which of the two periods his birth took place. It has frequently been remarked as a singular circumstance, that two eminent authors who have lived to extreme old age, Fontenelle and Voltaire, were both thus unlikely at their birth to live at all, both being born almost in a dying condition; yet not only did they enjoy unusually long life, but they retained their great faculties entire to the last, although the one died in his eighty-fifth year, and the other lived to within a few weeks of a hundred.

When only twelve years of age, he distinguished himself by the excellence of some begging verses to the Dauphin from an invalid who had served under the prince, and who applied for this help to the Master of the College of Louis le Grand, where Voltaire then was. The master being busy, handed him over to his promising scholar, as being quite able to do what was desired. The lines are very good, and the idea sufficiently happy. The old soldier is made to say that the different heathen gods having given Monseigneur various gifts at his birth, a more beneficent Deity had provided the petitioner's Christmas-box by bestowing on their favorite the boon of generosity. It is known that this incident procured for him the favor of the famous Ninon de l'Enclos, then in her ninetieth year, and to whom he was presented by his godfather, the Abbé de Châteauneuf. She died soon after, and left him a legacy of two thousand francs, to buy books with.[1] When his father found that he was introduced by the Abbé into this and other

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noticed by any one. Many persons have regarded that of February 20th as correct. But M. Berriat Saint-Prix, in his edition of the *Œuvres de Boileau* (vol. i., *Essai sur Boileau*, p. 11 and following), proves that it is inadmissible. The *acte de baptême*, November 22, 1694, reads: *born the day preceding*. This *acte* is signed by the father, then a notary, and who, as a notary, had felt all the inconveniences that might arise from not giving the precise date of the birth of the child.—Note to Condorcet's *Vie de Voltaire*, in the Didot edition of Voltaire's Works.—*Ed.*

[1] He has, in a letter which remains (*Mélanges Lit.*, ii. 294), recorded many

fashionable society, and that he was cultivating his taste for poetry, he became alarmed for his success in life, having destined him for the profession of the law. He placed him, therefore, in a school of jurisprudence, intending to purchase for him a President's place, according to the practice of the French bar in those days. Voltaire, however, had already begun to taste the sweets of classical study, and he had lived in a society frequented by the Abbé his godfather, who ap-

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particulars of her extraordinary life and great qualities. Her portrait by St. Evremond is well known; it is happily drawn:

> "L'indulgente et sage Nature
> A formé l'ame de Ninon
> De la volupté d'Epicure,
> Et de la vertu de Caton."

In consequence of a quarrel between two of her lovers, there was a proposition of sending her to a convent of "*Filles repenties:*" she said that would not suit her, as she was "*ni fille, ni repentie.*" The provident parents in good society used to place their sons under her patronage to form them for polite company. Of one Renaud, a coxcomb whom she was said to have formed, she observed: "Qu'elle faisait comme Dieu, qui s'était repenti d'avoir fait l'homme." When her old and intimate friend, Madame de Maintenon, became *dévote*, and offered to provide handsomely for her would she but follow her example, her answer was: "Je n'ai nul besoin ni de fortune, ni de masque." [1]

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[1] A writer in the *New Quarterly Review*, whose exceptions to Lord Brougham's views of Voltaire are not free from the common traditional prejudice, who chooses to apply the worst meaning to the *infâme*, says of this passage: "Lord Brougham has a note on Ninon, in which he refers to Voltaire's letter in the *Mélanges Littéraires*, as 'doing justice to some of her great qualities.' We have repernsed the letter. It is a gay, jocular summary of Ninon's career as a wit and a strumpet. He recites the most celebrated of her amours, and the most indecent of her jests:—but 'many great qualities!' One—and but one—honest action is stated: a lover having given her a casket of money to keep for him, she restored it with integrity. Common honesty is certainly more creditable than uncommon profligacy or uncommon impudence; but still it hardly amounts to a 'great quality,' even in a courtesan—at least not in a rich courtesan. What can Lord Brougham have meant?

"But Lord Brougham has made no reference to another article on Mademoiselle de l'Enclos which occurs in Voltaire's *Mélanges Historiques*, vol. i. p 217, &c. This is entitled, 'D'Abraham et de Ninon l'Enclos;' and here, after some pages of the usual mockery of the Old Testament, we have a full account of the Abbé de Châteauneuf's own love-passages with *Ninon sexagenaire*—thus concluded: 'Voilà la vérité de cette historiette que l'Abbé de Châteauneuf, mon bon parrain, à qui je dois mon baptême, m'a raconté souvent dans mon enfance, pour me former l'esprit et le cœur. As it appears from the paper which Lord Brougham does cite, that Ninon had been of old well acquainted with Madame Arouet, the mother of Voltaire, we think the whole affair of no small importance to his early history."—*Ed.*

pears to have been a person of loose morals and of skeptical opinions. The extreme bigotry which Madame de Maintenon had introduced into the Court of Versailles when the declining faculties and health of Louis XIV. had rendered him the victim of superstitious terrors, and, through these, the tool of priestly intolerance, gave rise to a reaction in the gay circles of Paris; and in resisting the inroads of that gloom by which the asceticism of the ancient mistress had signalized her late repentance, the Contis, the Chaulieus, the Sullys, the La Fères, carried their opposition further than they perhaps at first intended, or even afterwards were aware of: they patronized universal discussion, even of the most sacred subjects, and best received opinions, until a fashion of free thinking was set; and from being at first revolted at the intolerance which destroyed Catinat at court, notwithstanding his genius and his probity, on account of his supposed infidelity, and ascribed the defeats of Vendôme to his occasional absence from mass, without reflecting that Marlborough was a heretic and Eugene a deist; the frequenters of the most polished society in the world became accustomed to believe more sparingly than Catinat, and see less of the Host than Vendôme.

It was in this association that Voltaire, then a boy, became inured to the oblivion both of his law-books and of his religious principles, when his parent made a last effort to save him, and restore him to the learned profession, and to the bosom of the Church, by sending him as page or attaché to the French ambassador at the Hague, a near kinsman of the Abbé Châteauneuf. He there fell in love with the daughter of a profligate woman, Madame Dunoyer, who considering the match a bad one, had him sent home by the ambassador, and published his love-letters, which are admitted to have no merit. His father would only receive him on condition of his consenting to serve in a notary's office. A friend of the family, M. de Caumartin, had compassion on the sufferings which this arrangement occasioned, and obtained permission to have him pass some months in his country residence at St. Ange. The Bishop Caumartin, then an elderly man, and who had lived

with all the more learned persons of the past age, excited him by his conversation upon the Sullys and the Henrys, to meditate two of his greatest works, his epic poem and his history.

The death of Louis, which happened on Voltaire's return to Paris, gave rise to a very indecent expression of public joy, and to many libels upon his memory. One of these being without any foundation ascribed to him, his confinement in the Bastille was the consequence. Here, however, his spirit continued unbroken. He sketched the poem of the "Ligue," afterwards called the "Henriade;" and he corrected a tragedy, "Œdipe," which he had written several years before, when only eighteen years old. The imprisonment being in the course of a few weeks found to be entirely illegal and vexatious, the regent ordered his immediate liberation, with a sum of money by way of compensation. The tragedy was not acted till two years after, in 1718; and it is a singular fact, that when, in 1713, it had been in its original imperfect state submitted to Dacier, with the pedantry of his nature he strongly recommended the introduction of choruses, to be sung after the manner of the Greek tragedy. A letter of his is still extant, giving this sage and practical counsel; but the Greek critic was not the only pedant. When in 1762, Voltaire had gained the famous cause of Sirven, through the exertions of M. Merville, a leading advocate of Toulouse, he refused all pecuniary remuneration, but desired as his reward, that his client would now consent to add choruses to the "Œdipe."

How powerful was the sentiment of ambition in his nature appears not merely from his bold attempt at a tragedy—audaxque juventâ—in his eighteenth year, but from his adventurous competition for the prize of poetry proposed by the Académie Française a year or two before; the king having, in the superstition of his declining age, at length resolved to fulfil the promise of his predecessor by decorating the altar of Notre Dame. This formed the subject of the ode, which was rejected in favor of a ridiculous piece by the Abbé Dujarri; so that it is a singular fact in Voltaire's history that his first published work was a devotional poem.

The tragedy of "Œdipe" was successful; and Lamotte, then of established reputation, but which with ordinary poets is by no means a security against jealousy, had the noble candor to declare that this tragedy gave sure promise of a successor to Corneille and Racine. But the prejudices of the stage forced Voltaire to introduce a love scene against his better judgment, which had decided against the incongruous mixture of tenderness with the horrors of the subject. It is related of him, and he has himself countenanced the anecdote, that in the giddiness of youth, and plunged in dissipation, he was insensible to the dangers of failure, and felt so little of the nervous agitation belonging to a dramatic author's first night, as to be seen carrying in mockery the train of the high priest. Madame la Maréchale de Villars, then at the head of Parisian society, asked who that young man was, who appeared as if trying to have the play damned; and upon being told that it was neither more nor less than the author himself, she was so struck with the originality that she desired to have him presented to her. Becoming one of her circle, he conceived for her the first and probably the only passion which he ever seriously felt. His love was unsuccessful; but it interrupted his studies, nor did he ever after allude to it without a feeling of regret bordering upon remorse.

The merits of "Œdipe" no longer form a debatable question. If the continued representation for forty-five nights had left any doubt upon this subject, the concurrent voices of so many different audiences during the hundred years and upwards that it has kept possession of the stage, pronounce a sentence from which there is no appeal.[1] For an author of

[1] The judgments pronounced by the audience on a first representation are a very different test, being necessarily much more subject to accident, to caprice, and to party manœuvres. The striking example of the "Britannicus," nay, even of the "Phèdre" and the "Athalie" themselves (these two now admitted on all hands to be Racine's masterpieces), may well guard us against yielding to the first expressions of the vox populi. Perhaps even the great union of opinion in France, placing Corneille so far above Racine, is another instance of erroneous judgment produced by

any age it is a fine performance; for a young man of eighteen or nineteen, a truly wonderful one; promising, perhaps, considerable greater dramatic success than even the author of "Zaire" ever attained. But he unfortunately preferred writing *multa* rather than *multum;* and this remark is more peculiarly applicable to his dramatic compositions than to any of his other important efforts.

The distinguishing beauty of the "Œdipe" is its fervid, correct, and powerful declamation; and though the most magnificent passage be taken from Sophocles, there are numberless others of undoubted originality. Into some of the inconsistencies, and even absurdities, of the Greek plot he has fallen, and the most of whatever is good in that plot certainly is not his own. But no one who has either seen the representation or read the poem, can easily forget the powerful impression which its diction leaves on the mind. Some of the passages are marked by their supposed allusion to the priesthood of his own times; and one especially is generally given as his first declaration of war against the sacred order:

> "Nos prêtres ne sont point ce qu'un vain peuple pense—
> Notre crédulité fait toute leur science."—(Act iv. sc. 4.)

But surely, when we observe that this is only the summing up of an invective satirical, but perfectly just against the Pagan superstitions which are specified, we may well suppose, that had not his future writings supplied the commentary, no one could have deemed the allusion in these fine lines irreverent to the hierarchy of Rome. Now, it is true, they are sufficiently marked; and in consequence of that commentary they never fail to be applied. I recollect the thunder of applause which they called forth in 1814, when I saw this play during the first restoration. The court of Louis XVIII. was supposed to favor the Church in an especial manner, and this pointed the

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accidental circumstances. Had Racine preceded Corneille, would the decision have been the same? There may, however, be some ground for giving the same precedence to the latter that we yield to Massillon and Bourdaloue over Bossuet.

public attention more peculiarly to such allusions. Two other lines were productive of nearly equal applause:

> "Un prêtre, quel qu'il soit, quelque Dieu qui l'inspire,
> Doit prier pour ses rois, et non pas les maudire."—(Act iii. sc. 3.)

The reason of this excitement was, that the lines contain a reproof of the high priest's insolence, and that was sufficient. On another occasion, the same season, I heard much louder applause in that theatre. It was of the lines—

> "Le premier qui fût roi, fût un soldat heureux:
> Qui sert bien son pays n'a pas besoin d'aïeux."

The reference was instantly made to Napoleon, and the piece could hardly proceed for the boisterous plaudits.

It is certain that the tragedies of Voltaire are the works of an extraordinary genius, and that only a great poet could have produced them; but it is equally certain that they are deficient for the most part in that which makes the drama powerful over the feelings,—real pathos, real passion, whether of tenderness, of terror, or of horror. The plots of some are admirably contrived; the diction of all is pure and animated; in most passages it is pointed, and in many it is striking, grand, impressive; the characters are frequently well imagined and portrayed, though without sufficient discrimination; and thus often running one into another, from the uniformity of the language, terse, epigrammatic, powerful, which all alike speak. Nor are there wanting situations of great effect, and single passages of thrilling force; but, after all, the heart is not there; the deep feeling, which is the parent of all true eloquence as well as all true poetry, didactic and satirical excepted, is rarely perceived; it is rather rhetoric than eloquence, or, at least, rather eloquence than poetry. It is declamation of a high order in rhyme; no blank verse, indeed, can be borne on the French stage, or even in the French tongue; it is not fine dramatic composition: the periods roll from the mouth, they do not spring from the breast; there is more light than heat; the head rather than the heart is at work.

It seems that if there be any exception to this remark, we

must look for it in the "Zaire," his most perfect piece, although, marvellous to tell, it was written in two-and-twenty days. In my humble opinion, it is certainly obnoxious to the same general objection, though less than any of his other pieces; yet it is truly a noble performance, and it unites many of the great requisites of dramatic excellence. The plot, which he tells us was the work of a single day, is one of the most admirable ever contrived for the stage, and it is a pure creation of fancy. Nothing can be conceived more full of interest and life and spirit—nothing more striking than the combinations and the positions to which it gives rise, while at the same time it is quite natural, quite easy to conceive, in no particular violating probability. Nor can any thing be more happy or more judicious than the manner in which we are, at the very first, brought into the middle of the story, and yet soon find it unravelled and presented before our eyes without long and loaded narrative retrospects. Then the characters are truly drawn with a master's hand, and sustained perfectly and throughout both in word and in deed. Orosman, uniting the humanized feelings of an amiable European with the unavoidable remains of the Oriental nature, ambitious, and breathing war, more than becomes our character, yet generous and simple-minded; to men imperious, but as it were by starts, when the Tartar predominates; to woman delicate and tender, as if the Goth or the Celt prevailed in the harem; unable to eradicate the jealousy of the East, yet, like a European, too proud not to be ashamed of it as a degradation, and thus subduing it in all instances but one, when he is hurried away by the Asiatic temperament and strikes the fatal blow, which cannot lessen our admiration, nor even wholly destroy our esteem. The generous nature of Nourestan and Lusignan excites our regard, and, perhaps, alone of all the perfect characters in epic or in dramatic poetry, they are no way tiresome or flat. But Zaire herself, unlike other heroines, is, if not the first, at least equal to the first, of the personages in touching the reader and engaging his affections. Nothing can be conceived more tender; and the conflict between her passion for the Sultan and her affec-

ion for her family, between her acquired duty to the crescent and her hereditary inclination to the cross, is most beautifully managed. Of detailed passages it would be endless to make an enumeration, but some may be shortly marked. Few things in poetry are finer than Lusignan's simple answer to Chatillon, who tells him that he was impotent to save his children:

> "*C.* Mon bras chargé de fers ne les put pas secourir.
> *L.* Hélas! et j'étais père, et je ne pus mourir."

Nourestan's indignation, the boiling over of a fanatical crusader's enthusiasm against his sister for falling in love with an infidel prince (Act iii. sc. 4,) is a truly noble piece of declamation. Orosman's proud feeling towards the sex, for the first time following the Asiatic course (Act iii. sc. 7), is not less finely expressed:

> "Mais il est trop honteux de craindre une maîtresse—
> Aux mœurs de l'Occident laissons cette bassesse!
> Ce sexe dangereux, qui veut tout asservir,
> S'il commande en Europe, ici doit obéir."

The famous passage "Zaire, vous pleurez?" which electrified the audience in France, and never fails still to produce this effect, needs not be specified, except for the purpose of noting, that the exclamation "Zaire, vous m'aimez!" is hardly less touching, or less powerful to paint the Sultan's character.

Next to "Zaire" the "Mérope" certainly is Voltaire's finest drama; and its success at first was even greater than that of "Zaire." At one part the audience were so intoxicated with admiration, that they called out for Voltaire, and forced him to show himself—the first time that the honor was ever bestowed, which has now become worthless, because lavished on the author of every successful piece. But the multitude went a step further in his case, and insisted upon the beautiful daughter-in-law of the Maréchale de Villars publicly saluting him; a requisition savoring much more of indecorum than enthusiasm.

It is impossible either to deny the great merits of the "Mérope," or to doubt its marked inferiority to "Zaire." The com-

position, and, in general, the execution, must be confessed to be in the best manner of that eloquence, or rather rhetoric, which I have ventured to describe as the character of Voltaire's tragedies; but it is not, like "Zaire," at least many portions of "Zaire," a successful incursion into the adjoining, though far loftier domain of feeling; in a word, the high region of fine verse is here under the author's power; the higher region of poetry does not submit to his control. The fable is excellently pursued; while there is little original or very happy in the characters, of which the principal one is so possessed by a feeling of love and anxiety for a son whom she had barely seen, that it is difficult to sympathize with the leading sentiment of the piece. Fine passages no doubt abound, and bursts (*mouvemens*) of an impressive, and of a surprising and even elevating kind, are occasionally introduced, though by far the finest is imitated professedly from the "Mérope" of Maffei—it is when Egisthe mentions his mother; and Mérope then believing that he had murdered her son, that is himself, exclaims—

> "Barbare! il te reste une mère!
> Je serois mère encore sans toi," &c.—(Act iii. sc. 4.)

The verses on a military usurper have been already cited. Lines such as the concluding couplet of the second act are not rarely scattered through the piece, and never fail to produce a great effect in the delivery. They have, like the former, been not rarely applied to Napoleon.

> "Quand on a tout perdu, quand on n'a plus d'espoir,
> La vie est un opprobre, et la mort un devoir."

These, the "Zaire" and "Mérope," seem, beyond all comparison, and without any doubt, to be the finest of Voltaire's dramatic works. His own favorite, however, appears to have been the "Catiline," or "Rome Sauvée." He dwells with great complacency on its having been more applauded than "Zaire" on its first representation, and accounts for its not having, like "Zaire," kept possession of the stage, by observing that nobody now-a-days conspires, but every one has loved. The superiority of this to its rival, the "Catiline" of Crebillon, may also be

admitted; nor can we deny it a considerable degree of that which constituted Voltaire's dramatic merit, his eloquence far more remarkable than his poetry. It may also be admitted that if this criticism can ever lose its force, it must be in a composition of which the hero is Cicero; nor, if the eloquence were of a higher order—if it were fervid and impassioned—if it were warm from the heart, and addressed and moved the feelings—would the decision of which the author appears to complain ever have gone forth against it. But the tragedy has, besides many other faults, that of frigid declamation, in pure diction, often happy, generally pointed, even to epigram, but still cold and artificial. There is also to be remarked in the piece a singular want of judgment. The history of Catiline is not professed to be followed, yet all the departures from it are in diminution of the dramatic interest; and nothing can be less correct than the assertion which accompanies the confession that the facts of the story are changed—it is not true, or any thing like the truth, that the "genius and the character of Cicero, Catiline, Cato, and Cæsar, are faithfully painted." Can any thing be less excusable, whether we regard dramatic interest or the truth of history, than representing Catiline as uxorious, and all but won over to abandon his enterprise by his wife's remonstrances and tears? The absurdity of making Cæsar put down the conspiracy, and supersede C. Antonius and Petreius in the command at the battle in which Catiline fell, requires no comment. This, and Cæsar's rhodomontade before setting out, his embracing Cicero, and vowing that he goes either to die, or to justify the Consul's good opinion of him, and his being overpersuaded by a speech of Cicero, not merely to abandon Catiline but to destroy him, is as utterly unlike that great man's character as any thing that can well be imagined. For Cato, it is surely as little in his manner as can be, to tell Cicero that Rome calls him her father and her avenger, and that Envy at his feet trembles and adores him:

> "Et l'Envie à tes pieds t'admire avec terreur."

But the grand defect of this piece is the absurd and hopeless

attempt of bringing Cicero upon the stage. Brutus and Antony had been successfully so dealt with by Shakspeare; but they were men of action: Cicero, a mere orator, never could be endured as the hero of a piece; eloquence, the triumphs of the tongue, are wholly unfitted to form the subject of a drama. Voltaire has endeavored to supply the defect by making Catiline murder not his step-son, which he was supposed to have done, but his father-in-law, a certain Nonnius, which no one ever dreamt of but the poet; and his wife, in her grief and rage, puts herself to death by stabbing herself on the stage.

But if we desire to perceive how great is Voltaire's failure, we must not only consider what he has done to make his drama cold an uninteresting, but what materials he had within his reach, and avoided using. Few narratives present so lively, nay, so dramatic a picture as that of Sallust. The diction is fine; but had Livy written it, his exquisite and dignified style would have placed the Catiline conspiracy at the head of historical works. The character of Catiline, better given in some parts of Cicero, particularly the Pro Sulla, Pro Cœlio, and Pro Muræna; his dark, designing, and unscrupulous nature; his utter profligacy of life and manners; his fierce temper; his untamable ambition; his powers, as well of body as of mind; his invincible courage—all form a personage made for stage effect, and only prevented from producing it in the highest degree by such preposterous conceits as making him tender-hearted to his wife, a thing to have been carefully avoided by the dramatist, even if his letter, given by Sallust, shows some care for that very profligate woman and his child. But then what can be finer than the meeting holden in a remote recess of his house, and his address under cloud of night to his associates—to say nothing of the dark suspicion thrown out by the historian, that he made them drink human blood mixed with their wine when he swore them to the enterprise![1] But the speech is very fine—bold, abrupt, simple, concise—eminently

[1] Fuere eâ tempestate qui dicerent.—(Cap. xxii.)

calculated for the occasion: "Quin igitur, expergiscemini? En illa, illa quam sæpe optastis, libertas! Fortuna omnia victoribus præmia posuit: res tempus, pericula, egestas, belli spolia magnifica, magis quam oratio mea vos hortentur. Vel imperatore, vel milite me utimine. Neque animus, neque corpus a vobis aberit." The other speech which he makes on the eve of the fight is also noble and characteristic: "Quod si virtuti vestræ fortuna inviderit, cavete inulte animam amittatis; neu capti potius sicuti pecora trucidemini, quam virorum, more pugnantes, cruentam atque luctuosam victoriam hostibus relinquatis."[1] With such noble materials, Voltaire makes as poor a speech as it was possible to manufacture—as wordy and unimpressive. He calls his conspirators "an assemblage of the greatest of human kind;" and that being not enough, they are "conquerors of kings—avengers of their countrymen—his true friends, his equals, his supports." He tells them that "they had subdued Tigranes and Mithridates, and made the Euphrates red with their blood, only to make worthless senators proud, who, as a recompense, allowed the conspirators to adore their persons at a distance." How much finer is the simple description in Sallust! "The Patricians squander away their wealth in building out the sea and levelling mountains, while we are without the necessaries of life!" But the whole comparison is to the same effect.

Then, can any thing be finer than the scene in the Senate where Cicero made his first famous speech? First the historian paints Catiline as full of dissimulation, and acting the part of a suppliant, with downcast look and submissive voice, appealing to the senators whether it was likely a man of his rank and former services should be guilty of the things laid to his charge, while the State was defended by "Marcus Tullius Cicero! inquilinus civis urbis Romæ!" (one living in a hired lodging). Thereupon a loud cry was raised against him, and he was saluted with the name of rebel and parricide. "Tum ille furibundus—'Quoniam quidem circumventus, in-

[1] Cap. lviii.

quit, ab inimicis, præceps agor, incendium meum ruinâ extinguam.'"[1]

Thus the Catiline of Sallust; but he of Voltaire, after saying his part is taken, and calling his followers to come away, departs quietly enough, not the *furibundus proripuit* of Sallust, or even the *triumphans gaudio erupit* of Tully—but

> "Vous sénàt, incertain, qui venez de m'entendre,
> Choisissez à loisir le parti qu'il faut prendre."

And so it is throughout; the same contrast between the tame, feeble, vague verses of the modern poet, and the spirited, the picturesque of the ancient historian, really a finer poet than he who would needs dramatize the story into prose. The battle so exquisitely painted by Sallust could not indeed be rendered on the stage, but something of the noble speech that preceded might have been given. Then how tamely does Cæsar, in recounting the fight, render the "Memor generis atque pristinæ dignitatis, in confertissimos hostes incurrit," and the sad and striking scene displayed after the battle, when "quisque quem pugnando locum ceperat eum amissâ animâ corpore tegebat;" but Catiline, on the contrary, was found "longe a suis inter hostium cadavera, paululum etiam spirans, ferociamque animi quam habuerat vivus in voltu retinens.[2] This is far from the greatest failure of Voltaire, but it is a failure, and a failure by departing from the admirable simplicity of the original:

> "Catiline terrible au milieu du carnage,
> Entouré d'ennemis immolés à sa rage,
> Sanglant, couvert de traits, et combattant toujours,
> Dans nos rangs éclairés a terminé ses jours.
> Sur des morts entassés l'effroi de Rome expire:
> Romain, je le condamne; et soldat, je l'admire."

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[1] Cap. xxxi. Cicero (pro Muræna, c. xxv.) gives a different account, but less picturesque: "erupit senatû triumphans gaudio;" and adds, that he had some days before used the famous words in answer to a threat of prosecution from Cato; but Voltaire was at perfect liberty to choose either version of the fact, and he preferred his own mean and most tame design.

[2] One can never read this great masterpiece of narrative without recollecting Quinctilian's phrase, "Salustii immortalem velocitatem."

It may here be observed that the admirable trait of each soldier falling where he fought, but the terrible chief far apart from all his men, because in advance of them all, being first left out, the extraordinary effect of *paululum etiam spirans* where he had fallen, and the *ferociam animi voltu retinens*, are equally abandoned. One is really tempted to question (as some have questioned) Voltaire's thorough acquaintance with the force of the Latin tongue. Assuredly he very differently judges the eloquence of Massillon, in a language of which, like him, he was so accomplished a master.

It would be unjust to close the "Rome Sauvée" without awarding just praise to many of its detached parts, and especially of the lines, worthy of Cicero himself, which he is made to pronounce—

> "Romains, j'aime la glorie, et ne veux point m'en taire!
> Des travaux des humains, c'est le digne salaire:
> Sénat! en vous servant, il la faut acheter;
> Qui n'ose la vouloir, n'ose la mériter!"

All accounts agree that when Voltaire, at the first representation of the piece in a private theatre, acted this part, his enthusiastic delivery of these words, conveying a sentiment so intimately mixed with his whole soul, produced such an effect that the audience could hardly tell if it was the poet or the great orator they heard.

The conspiracy of Catiline has afforded not only to Crebillon but to our Ben Jonson the subject of a tragedy. He copies, by translating, Sallust and Cicero; but he does not preserve the fire of the one, or the picturesque effect of the other. The speech to the conspirators is but poorly rendered. Thus the *Quin expergiscemini?* by being made an exhortation instead of a reproach, sinks into

> "Wake, wake, brave friends,
> And meet the liberty you oft have wish'd for."

How much finer the literal version, "Why wake ye not? See! see! that liberty you so often have wished for." Nothing can be more poor than the version in blank verse of the

first Catilinarian, unless perhaps it be Catiline's exclamation on rushing forth from the Senate—

> "I will not burn without my funeral pile:
> It shall be in the common fire rather than mine own,
> For fall I will with all, ere fall alone."

Nor is the speech before the battle better rendered; thus—

> "And if our destiny envy our virtue
> The honor of the day, yet let us vow
> To sell ourselves at such a price as may
> Undo the world to buy us, and make Fate,
> While she tempts ours, fear her own estate."

A piece of rant and fustian which the poet probably thought Sallust had not the genius to think of. The description of Catiline's body after the battle is not perhaps quite so bad, nor the idea lent to the historian so feeble—

> "Yet did his look retain
> Some of its fierceness, and his hands still moved,
> As if he labor'd yet to grasp the State
> With these rebellious parts."

Altogether the piece is immeasurably inferior to Voltaire's in every part on which a comparison can be made. In learning, it is true, the Frenchman is far surpassed, who might have written his "Catiline" without ever having read a line either of the orator or of the historian; but the Englishman's far greater failure is not excused by his attempt being the more learned.

Of the inferior dramas, "Alzire" and "Mahomet" or "Le Fanatisme" are certainly the best; but they are far from being equal to the "Zaire" and "Mérope," though greatly superior to the "Catiline." The object of both is to present fanaticism in its most dangerous shape—in the union which it not unfrequently forms with great and even with good qualities. This object is well attained, and there is also a mixture of softness in the characters of Alzire and Palmire which forms a pleasing relief to the harsher features of Mahomet, Gusman, and Zamore. Both tragedies contain fine passages of declama-

tion; and the picture of the revolting and hateful character of the Spaniards (in the New World, at least)—that execrable and yet despicable mixture of cruelty and fanaticism, fraud and avarice—with which "Alzire" opens, is not surpassed in moral descriptive poetry. "Alzire" was perfectly successful from the first; but the favor which it then enjoyed has worn out. "Mahomet" was at first only performed at Lille, and during its first representation the news of Frederick's victory at Molwitz having been received by Voltaire, he interrupted the performance to make it known, saying to those around him, "You'll see, that piece of Molwitz will make mine pass." At Paris it was forbidden by the timidity of Cardinal Fleury, alarmed by some passages. Voltaire presented it to the Pope Benedict XIV. (Lambertini), accompanying it with two very indifferent Latin verses as an inscription for his Holiness's portrait. He received an answer full of kindness and liberality from that eminent priest, who also mentioned that an ignorant Frenchman had objected to the quantity of *Hic* in the Latin lines, and that he had put him down with two lines of Virgil, showing it to be either long or short, though he had not read Virgil for fifty years. Voltaire replied that a third verse should have been given, and inscribed on the Pope's picture by all his subjects—

> "Hic vir, hic est tibi quem promitti sæpius audis;"

adding very inaccurately, if not ignorantly, that the word is both long and short in this line, whereas it is only long by position.

The late Lord Grantley told me that when he was a young man fresh from Eton, he passed a few days at Ferney, and found Voltaire much puzzled to restore, consistently with the metre, a Latin couplet which a stranger had made upon him, of which a word or two had been displaced. The Etonian pleased him exceedingly by at once performing the easy operation—

> "Ecce domus qualem Augusti non protulit ætas
> Hic sunt Mæcenas, Virgiliusque simul."

The author of "Catiline" had confounded himself by beginning with *domus*. It must be added, however, that he wrote an excellent motto for a dissertation upon heat, which he preferred in the competition for an academy prize—

> "Ignis ubique latet, naturam amplectitur omnem
> Cuncta parit, renovat, dividit, unit, alit."

Crebillon, then director of the Parisian stage, was far less tolerant towards the "Mahomet" than the Roman pontiff had been, and prohibited the representation of the play for ten years, when D'Alembert (in 1751), named by D'Argenson to examine it, reported in its favor with a courage wholly to be expected from him. The success of the piece was great, but, like "Alzire," it has not retained its place on the stage.

Many of his other pieces were damned from the first. This was the fate of "Artemire," the second which he produced; but he changed it in some particulars, and it had a great success under the name of "Mariamne," as indeed "Zaire" itself had been the substitute for "Eryphyle," which failed. "Adelaide," in like manner, failed, and "Gaston de Foix," its substitute, had some success. The failure was owing to a jest passed on one of the passages much admired by critics. When Vendôme exclaims, "Es tu content, Couci?" a wag in the pit cried—"Couci-couci," the French for so-so, or indifferent. A similar practical joke had for a while endangered the performance of "Mariamne"—some one, on the queen drinking, cried out "*La Reine boit.*" The panegyrists of Voltaire dwell on these and similar anecdotes to account for the loss of many of his pieces, but no play of real merit was ever thus destroyed. Many, also, praise the construction of some of them, and dwell especially upon the excellence of the plots. But the theatrical hell, as well as the other, is paved with good designs ill executed.

As for the comedies of Voltaire, they are wholly to be rejected: the utmost praise to which they can aspire is as *pièces de société*. They were indeed very little played at any time,

except in private parties. The best is the "Ecossaise," which never was played at all. It is a bitter satire on Freron, under the name of Frelon (hornet), a profligate, mercenary, libeller, who, like some of his vile tribe in our own day, earned a miserable subsistence by selling the venom of his pen to the cowardly malice of some, and his forbearance to the less malignant but as despicable timidity of others.[1] The "Enfant Prodigue" had considerable success, being played, it is said, nearly thirty times; but it was never known to be Voltaire's till he claimed it some years after. It is his most elaborate attempt in comedy, being a piece in five acts. Its verse, in five feet (or ten syllables), was an innovation, and apparently was not relished.

Thus, if the distance were less which separates Voltaire's tragedies from the rude and awful grandeur of the "Cid," and the exquisite pathos and perfect harmony of the "Phèdre" and "Athalie," he would still be, on the comparison of general dramatic powers, left far behind Corneille, whose "Menteur," and Racine, whose "Plaideurs," continue to keep their place in the line with the comedies of Molière himself, though the former is partially imitated from the Spanish, and the latter from the Attic stage.[2]

The "Œdipe," which was performed in 1718, was followed, in 1722 and 1724, by the "Artemire" and "Mariamne," of which mention has been made; and the poem of the "Ligue" was finished and published in the latter year, and afterwards given under the name of the "Henriade." To this work may be applied the same observation which the dramatic poetry of the author gives rise to:—It is beautifully written—it abounds in fine description, in brilliant passages of a noble diction, in sentiments admirable for their truth, their liberality, their humanity—its tendency is to make fanaticism hateful, oppression

[1] This vile person had a yet viler son, the execrable conventionalist, who, during the Reign of Terror, almost equalled in the South, the atrocities of Currier and Lebon in the North of France.

[2] The "Wasps" of Aristophanes, a satire on the Athenian special jurymen.

despicable, injustice unbearable; but it is the grand work of a philosopher and a rhetorician more than the inspiration of a poet. No one ever ventured upon a comparison of this epic with the "Iliad" or the "Odyssey;" the "Æneid" has been reckoned to present more facilities of approach, but at how great a distance does it leave the "Henriade!" Even Lucan, if less tender, is far more majestic; Tasso has, in every one essential quality, immeasurably surpassed Voltaire; with Milton he will not bear to be named, far less compared; and Dante, little epic as he is, has more touches of the poetic fire, more inimitable pictures drawn with a single stroke, more appeals to our feelings of horror, wonder, and even pity, in a single canto, than can be found in the whole ten of the "Henriade." There abounds in the poem fine writing, smooth versification, noble ideas, admirable sentiments—but poetry is wanting. The objection made by all, or nearly all critics, that the plot is so clumsily framed as to make the hero a subordinate person for nearly the first half, and to place over his head, as his sovereign and master, one of the most despicable and even disgusting voluptuaries that ever reigned in modern times, is perhaps not altogether well grounded, though it has some foundation. Although the first in rank, Valois (Henry III.) is a cipher, while his successor is the person actively employed in the conduct of affairs; and were the last a sort of mayor of the palace, the objection would lose its whole force: but Valois is not at all a *roi fainéant;* we are called upon to recognize his existence and his acts; we are even required to feel for him when he falls by the hands of an assassin; to accomplish his destruction, the spirits Discord and Fanaticism are evoked from hell; the form of Guise, whom Valois had murdered, is assumed, and the king expires uttering a speech calculated to excite great interest in his fate.

This, however, must be reckoned as the least of the objections to which the poem is exposed; nor is the want of scenes surrounded with peril to try the hero's courage, nor even the feeble and unskilful manner in which the great event of the piece, Henry's conversion to obtain the crown, the most fata-

defect. The piece is without dramatic interest; the characters are not sustained in action, still less in speech—indeed there is hardly any speaking in the poem. It is truly singular to find a writer, whose forte as a poet lay in dramatic composition, almost entirely abandon his stronghold when he comes to compose his epic. The action proceeds, but it proceeds by way of narrative. The characters are unfolded, but it is by the descriptions of the author, not by their own words. Indeed there are very few characters brought forward, and scarcely any but the hero himself bear their parts in the action. Want of fine metaphors, and penury of figurative expression, have been always imputed to it; and though there is no lack of similes, these are not very happy. But the cardinal defect is, that the author appears perpetually before us; it is a history rather than a poem—a history in numerous verse, and beautifully composed, but not more dramatic, and certainly less beautifully composed, than many passages of Livy, and some of Sallust. The objection made to the introduction of philosophy, as having no warrant from the ancients, is hypercritical, besides being incorrect; Virgil's cosmogony in the sixth Æneid afforded a precedent, if, in a modern poem, any were wanting. The same answer may be given to the cavil against his giving characters of persons introduced. Even Virgil has a few touches of this kind, and Lucan largely uses his moral pencil. But however admirable these passages of the "Henriade," and how easily soever we may be disposed to admit them as legitimate, they are exceptionable, as the only means on which the poet relies for bodying forth his conceptions. Again and again the remark occurs; we take the whole of the portraits and of the action from the artist, and not from the actors.

If the failures are signal in great passages, such as called for the full exertion of the poet's power—for example, the St. Bartholomew, and the famine; the death of Coligny in the former being altogether tame, with the exception of the lines which represent him as a king adored by his people, while his assassins, awe-struck by his presence, kneel before

him;[1] the latter being described by words conveying general ideas of suffering or of disgust, not by things; and the picture of the infernal Catherine de Medicis receiving Coligny's head,[2]—if the failure be still more signal in the dénouement, Henry's conversion operated by an address of St. Louis to the Almighty, in which, forgetting Massillon's celebrated exordium to Louis XIV.'s funeral sermon, the saint is actually made to call the hero "*Le Grand Henri*,"—nay, if the details of that conversion are so described as to make it almost appear that Voltaire is laughing in his sleeve,[3] we must allow the very great beauty of other passages. The description of the Temple of Love, with which the ninth canto opens, is rich and splendid; the picture of St. Louis descending to stay the conqueror's hand in the sixth; the characters drawn so finely and forcibly in the seventh, especially those of Richelieu and Mazarin; the more concise traits by which he paints Guise in the third—

> "Connaissant ses périls, et ne redoutant rien,
> Heureux guerrier, grand prince, et mauvais citoyen;"

and Morney in the sixth—

> "Il marche en philosophe, où l'honneur le conduit,
> Condamne les combats, plaint son maître, et le suit;"—

these are all of the very highest excellence in their kind, though that kind is not epic, hardly poetical. So are such passages of profound sense as the strains of the immortal choir in the

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[1] "Et de ces assassins ce grand homme entouré,
Semblant un roi puissant par son peuple adoré."—(ii. 219.)

[2] "Medicis le reçut avec indifférence,
Sans paraître jouir du fruit de sa vengeance,
Sans remords, sans plaisir, maîtresse de ses sens,
Et comme accoutumée à de pareils encens."—(ii. 242.)

[3] See particularly x. 480, et seq.—This passage contains the line on transubstantiation which Marmontel admires so much as to pronounce that curse of Fénelon against those who are not moved by the famous couplet in the first Eclogue, "Fortunate senex," &c., "Malheur à qui n'est pas ému en le lisant." I fear many a reader lies under this anathema. The verse is—

> "Et lui découvre un Dieu dans un pain qui n'est plus."
> "And in a loaf that is no more reveals a God."

seventh canto,—strains "which each star repeated in its course,"—

> "A ta faible raison garde-toi de te rendre,
> Dieu t'a fait pour l'aimer, et non pour le comprendre;
> Invisible à tes yeux, qu'il règne dans ton cœur,
> Il confonde l'injustice, il pardonne à l'erreur;
> Mais il punit aussi toute erreur volontaire,
> Mortel ouvre les yeux quand son soleil t'éclaire!"

But the finest of all these extraordinary passages are such as in the same canto, by far the finest of the poem, paint not merely by abstract ideas and by verbose descriptions, but by strokes of genuine poetry, the fiend of Envy:

> "Là git la sombre Envie, à l'œil timide et louche,
> Versant sur des lauriers les poisons de sa bouche;
> Le jour blesse ses yeux, dans l'ombre étincelans,
> Triste amante des morts, elle hait les vivans."

> "Pale Envy see, with faltering step advance,
> With look suspicious, indirect, askance,
> With eyes that quiver and abhor the light,
> But flash with fire and sparkle in the night:
> She pours her venom o'er each laureled head,
> Hates all that live, sad lover of the dead."

Of Pride:

> "Auprès d'elle est l'Orgueil, qui se plait et s'admire."

Of Weakness:

> "La Faiblesse au teint pale, aux regards abattus:
> Tyran qui cède au crime et détruit les vertus."

> "Weakness, with paly hue and downcast eyes,
> Under whose iron rule vice thrives and virtue dies."

Of Ambition:

> "Sanglante, inquiète, égarée,
> De trônes, de tombeaux, d'esclaves entourée."

> "Restless, bloodstain'd, all perils wildly braves,
> Stalks among thrones, and sepulchres, and slaves."

Of Hypocrisy:

> "La tendre Hypocrisie aux yeux pleins de douceur:
> Le ciel est dans ses yeux, l'enfer est dans son cœur."

> "The tender creature's eyes with sweetness swell:
> Heaven's in those eyes, and in her heart is hell."

Nor is the song of these furies, on seeing Henry approach their impious troop, without the highest merit:

> "Quel mortel, disent-ils, par sa juste conduite,
> Vient nous persécuter dans l'éternelle nuit?"

These are passages of true poetry; they even approach the seventh canto to the sixth book of the "Æneid." It may be questioned if the ideas of making Envy "triste amante des morts"—Feebleness "tyran qui cède aux crimes et détruit les vertus"—and Hypocrisy "tendre," are equalled by any of Virgil's moral pictures. Certainly to all in the eleventh book of the "Odyssey" it is beyond doubt immeasurably superior, as indeed is the sixth Æneid. Nor can we hesitate to affirm that, had the rest of the "Henriade" been composed in the same poetic spirit, we should not have been suffered with impunity to consider it an eloquent history.

In the year 1730, Voltaire wrote part of another poem, which he finished at intervals during the seven or eight years following—his too famous mock-heroic, the "Pucelle d'Orléans." It is painful and humiliating to human genius to confess, what yet is without any doubt true, that this is, of all his poetical works, the most perfect, showing most wit, most spirit, most of the resources of a great poet, though of course the nature of the subject forbids all attempts at either the pathetic or the sublime; but in brilliant imagery—in picturesque description—in point and epigram—in boundless fertility of fancy—in variety of striking and vigorous satire—all clothed in verse as natural as Swift's and far more varied as well as harmonious—no prejudice, however naturally raised by the moral faults of the work, can prevent us from regarding it as the great masterpiece of his poetical genius. Here of course the panegyric must close, and it must give way to indignation at such a perversion of such divine talents. The indecency, often amounting to absolute obscenity, which pervades nearly the whole composition, cannot be excused on the plea that it is only a witty licentiousness, instead of one which excites the passions; still less can it be palliated by citing bad precedents,

least of all by referring to such writers as Ariosto, who more rarely violates the laws of decorum;[1] whereas Voltaire is ready to commit this offence at every moment, and seems ever to take the view of each subject that most easily lends itself to licentious allusions. But this is not all. The "Pucelle" is one continued sneer at all that men do hold, and all that they ought to hold, sacred, from the highest to the least important subjects, in a moral view—from the greatest to the most indifferent, even in a critical view. Religion and its ministers and its professors—virtue, especially the virtues of a prudential cast—the feelings of humanity—the sense of beauty—the rules of poetical composition—the very walks of literature in which Voltaire had most striven to excel—are all made the constant subjects of sneering contempt, or of ribald laughter; sometimes by wit, sometimes by humor, not rarely by the broad grins of mere gross buffoonery. It is a sad thing to reflect that the three masterpieces of three such men as Voltaire, Rousseau, Byron, should all be the most immoral of their compositions. It seems as if their prurient nature had been affected by a bad but criminal excitement to make them exceed themselves. Assuredly if such was not Voltaire's case, he well

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[1] In some of the author's correspondence he is fond of referring to indelicate passages of other writers in his justification; nay, even to the plain language used in some parts of the Old Testament. This flimsy reason is at once put to flight by Sir Joshua Reynolds' and Mr. Hume's illustration of the nakedness of the Indian and the prostitute. But it is worth while to observe how carefully the first and greatest of poets avoids all cause of blame in the passages where he is brought towards the verge of indecency. The Song of the Bard, in the 8th Odyssey, where Vulcan's discovery of Mars and Venus is related, is the most remarkable of these; and the jocose talk of Apollo and Mars on the subject savors somewhat of ribaldry. But see the short and simple expressions used, and mark that nothing is liquor ishly dwelt upon:

Ὡς τα πρωτα μίγησαν εν Ἡφαιστοιο δομοισιν.—(viii. 269.)

And—

Αυταρ εγων ευδοιμι παρα χρυσιη Αφροδιτη.—(viii. 342.)

So when describing in the 11th Odyssey Neptune's rape of Pyro, the old bard only says—

Αυσε δε παρθενιην ζωνην, κατα δ'υπνον εχευεν.—(xi. 244.)

merits the blame; for he scrupled not to read his "Pucelle" to his niece, then a young woman.[1]

But here it would be unjust to forget that the same genius which underwent this unworthy prostitution, was also enlisted by its versatile possessor in the service of virtue and of moral truth. There may be some doubt if his moral essays, the "Discours sur l'Homme," may not be placed at the head of his serious poetry—none whatever that it is a performance of the highest merit. As the subject is didactic, his talents, turned towards grave reasoning and moral painting, adapted rather to satisfy the understanding than to touch the heart, and addressing themselves more to the learned and polite than to the bulk of mankind, occupied here their appointed province, and had their full scope. Pope's moral essays gave the first hint of these beautiful compositions; but there is nothing borrowed in them from that great moral poet, and there is no inferiority in the execution of the plan. A strict regard to modesty, with the exception of a line or two, reigns throughout, and the object is to inculcate the purest principles of humanity, of tolerance, and of virtue. None but a Romanist bigot could ever have discovered the lurking attack upon religion in the noble verses against substituting vain ceremonies for good works, and attempting to honor the Deity by ascetic abstinence from the enjoyments which he has kindly provided for our happiness. Nay, the finest panegyric on the ministry of Christ is to be found mingled with the same just reprehensions of those who pervert and degrade his doctrines (Disc. vii.), and even the optimism of which in his other works he has ridiculed the extravagant doctrines, is here preached with a pious approval of its moderate and rational faith (Disc. iii. v.) His ridicule of saints is confined to the fanatical devotees or hypocritical pretenders who degrade and desecrate the name. If he mentions any miracles with disrespect, it is their false ones, as in that fine passage, which yet gave offence, in the seventh Discourse—

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[1] *Correspondance Générale*, iii. 454.

"Les miracles sont bons; mais soulager son frére,
Mais tirer son ami du sein de la misère,
Mais à ses ennemis pardonner leurs vertus,
C'est un plus grand miracle, et qui ne se fait plus."

To judge of the admirable tendency of this noble poem, we need only cite such lines as give the subject of the first discourse—omitted strangely with some of the very finest of the whole, as those on Timante, Cyrus, and De Thou, in the seventh:

"Mortel, en quelque état que le ciel t'ait fait naître,
Sois soumis, sois content, et rend grace à ton maître:"

and those on tolerance in the second—

"Ferme en tes sentimens et simple dans ton cœur,
Aime la vérité, mais pardonne à l'erreur;
Fuis les importuner d'un zèle atrabilaire.
Ce mortel qui s'égare est un homme, et ton frère;
Sois sage pour toi seul, compatissant pour lui,
Fais ton bonheur enfin par le bonheur d'autrui."

The panegyric on friendship in the fourth is perhaps unequalled on that trite subject. That point and satire should be found in this poem was to be expected, but they are by no means overdone; nay, they are kept in subjection to the great and good design of the work; and if we have a dark picture strongly but admirably drawn, it is that of the despicable Des Fontaines:

"Ce vil fripier d'écrits que l'intérêt dévore,
Qui vend au plus offrant son encre et ses fureurs,
Méprisable en son goût, détestable en ses mœurs.
Médisant, qui se plaint des brocards qu'il essuye,
Satirique, ennuyeux, disant que tout l'ennuye,
Criant que le bon goût s'est perdu dans Paris,
Et le prouvant très—bien, du moins, par ses écrits."
(Disc. iii.)

"Huckster of printed wares, who barters still
The oil or venom of his hireling quill;
Whose taste and morals are alike impure,
And none his writings, none his life endure;
A general slanderer, touch him and he roars,
Dully, the dulness of the age deplores,

Cries that at Paris taste in books there's none,
And proves it if he can but sell his own."

We have also such wholesome morality as the couplet against asceticism in the tenth:

"Malgré la sainteté de son auguste emploi,
C'est n'être bon à rien de n'être bon qu'à toi."

And the noble one in the third against envy—

"La gloire d'un rival s'obstine à t'outrager,
C'est en le surpassant que tu dois t'en venger!"

But some passages have high merit of a more purely poetical cast. There is nothing finer, if any thing so fine, in Pope, as the close of the fifth, where he compares his own prosecution of his literary labors, while arrested at Francfort, to Pan's continuing to play while Cacus seized his flocks; and then breaks out in a strain not surpassed by Virgil:

"Heureux qui jusqu'au temps du terme de sa vie,
Des beaux arts amoureux, peut cultiver les fruits!
Il brave l'injustice, il calme les ennuis,
Il pardonne aux humains, il rit de leur délire,
Et de sa main mourant il touche encore la lyre."

"Ah, happy he who to life's latest hour,
Of the arts enamor'd, plucks their fruit and flower;
He braves injustice, snail-paced time beguiles,
Forgives his foes, at human folly smiles.
Life's glimmering lamp feeds with poetic fire,
And with his dying fingers sweeps the lyre."

There is, perhaps, one yet greater passage, the conclusion of the third canto:

"Qu'il est grand, qu'il est doux, de se dire à soi-même,
Je n'ai point d'ennemis, j'ai des rivaux que j'aime,
Je prends part à leur gloire, à leur maux, à leur biens,
Les arts nous ont unis, leurs beaux jours sont les miens:
C'est ainsi que la terre avec plaisir rassemble,
Ces chênes, ces sapins, qui s'élèvent ensemble,
Un suc toujours égal est préparé pour eux;
Leur pieds touchent aux enfers, leur cime est dans les cieux;
Leur trônc inébranlable, et leur pompeuse tête,
Résiste, en se touchant, aux coups de la tempête;

Ils vivent l'un par l'autre, ils triomphent du temps,
Tandis que sous leur ombre on voit de vils serpens,
Se livrer, en sifflant, des guerres intestines,
Et de leur sang impur arroser leurs racines."

The following translation is most imperfect, and has only the merit of being very literal:

"How grand, how sweet, the heavenly strains ascend,
Foes I have none, my rival is my friend;
The arts unite us, common are our cares,
And each the other's griefs and glories shares:
So Earth, our common parent, loves to rear
Yon oak, yon pine, and make them flourish near;
On one green spot the sylvan giants stand,
Cast one broad shadow o'er the grateful land;
Feel the same juice through all their veins arise;
Deep pierce their roots entwined, their tops approach the skies.
Their trunks unshaken, of majestic form,
Embracing each the other, mock the storm;
O'er time they triumph, strong in mutual aid,
While envious snakes, obscure, frequent their shade,
And hiss, and sting, and with each other's blood
Impure, profane the monarchs of the wood."

The "Loi Naturelle," though not without considerable beauties, and altogether free from exceptionable passages, is every way inferior to this fine poem. The "Désastre de Lisbonne" is of the same merit; and though the object is to cry down those who deny the existence of evil, it conducts the argument with perfect decency—nay, the turn given to it at the close is of a purely religious character.

"Le passé n'est pour nou qu'un triste souvenir,
Le présent est affreux s'il n'est point d'avenir;
Si la nuit du tombeau détruit l'être qui pense,
Un jour tout sera bien—'voilà notre espérance!'
Tout est bien aujourd'hui—voilà l'illusion!"

"Sad the remembrance of the moments past,
And sad the present, if they be the last!
O'er all our landscape evil sheds a gloom,
If all our prospect's bounded by the tomb;
When we say, 'all is well,' from truth we stray,
Our comfort is, 'all will be well one day.'"

It is melancholy to reflect on the use which was sometimes made of such a rich genius, and to think of the benefits which might have been showered down upon mankind by the wise and temperate employment of those treasures. Great as were the services undeniably rendered in spite of the evil mixture, they sink into nothing compared with what might have been hoped from their pure and diligent devotion to the best inter ests of mankind.

There needs no comment upon the numerous class of the lighter and shorter productions, the *verse de société*, the epigrams, the *jeux d'esprit*, in which he was by common consent admitted to have excelled all his contemporaries—probably all the wits that ever lived and wrote. Their great inequality is no doubt as certain, and it was an inevitable consequence of such a facility as he possessed, and such an active spirit as moved him. Their peculiar adaptation to the circumstances that gave them birth is also a necessary concomitant of this kind of composition. But it is singular that the most elaborate of this whole class of his writings, and the one which he probably most valued, the "Guerres civiles de Genève," is without exception the worst of all his productions, and can hardly be matched for dulness and flatness by any undoubted production in verse of any other eminent poet.

It seemed convenient to discuss the question, or rather the kind and the degree of what is unquestionable—Voltaire's poetical excellence—on the occasion of his first success, the "Œdipe," in order to take the whole subject at once, and not to break the continuity of our narrative each time that a new drama or a new poem was produced by his fertile genius. We must now return to the history of his life.

The success of "Œdipe" placed him, though young, on the lists of fame, and of dramatic fame, the most quick of all others, especially at Paris, in its returns both of profit and social enjoyment. He became the friend, even the confidant, of the Duc de Richelieu, and shared in his disgrace under the

regent, being obliged for a while to quit Paris. But on the representation of the "Mariamne," he was permitted to return, and he soon after accompanied Madame de Rupelmonde to the Low Countries. To her he addressed in that year, 1722, the "Epitre à Uranie," a skeptical rather than a plainly deistical ode, which possessed some poetical merit, but was forgotten among his subsequent successes. At Brussels he made the acquaintance of J. B. Rousseau, and laid the foundation of the unrelenting animosity with which that middling writer and irritable personage pursued him ever after.[1] This he owed to a jest; having told him, on reading his "Ode to Posterity," "that it would never reach its destination." Rousseau, himself the author of many licentious epigrams against the clergy, hypocritically affected to take offence at the "Epitre à Uranie," and at Voltaire's irreverent demeanor during mass. Had he but spared the truth which he spoke in jest on the bad ode, he might have scoffed with Lucian and blasphemed with Borgia.

He now endeavored in vain to regain the enjoyment he most loved—the society of Paris. An unfortunate quarrel with the Chevalier de Rohan exposed him to the resentment of the court, and the risk of again inhabiting the Bastille. Some epigram or jest at the Chevalier's expense had been reported to him, and he basely set his servants on the wit, whom they severely beat. A challenge was the consequence; but as the poet's rank did not authorize this liberty, he was on the point of being handed over to the police, or secured by a *lettre de cachet*, and he resolved to fly.[2] His plan was to visit England,

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[1] "Voltaire," says Condorcet, "made no response till after fifteen years of patience." *Ed.*

[2] Brougham is here sadly mistaken. We transfer a note to Condorcet's *Vie de Voltaire* in the Didot edition of Voltaire's Works, that will afford all the information to be had on this point:

"Du Vernet having, on this subject, asked Voltaire for information, Voltaire referred him to Thieriot; and Du Vernet expresses himself in this wise: 'The Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot (a degenerate scion,—he was reproached with want of courage and with usury) . . . sometimes dined with the Duc de Sulli, where Voltaire very often dined. One day he was very

attracted by her liberty, and above all, by that which he seems ever to have valued most—the spirit of tolerance and the security against ecclesiastical oppression. He lived above two years in London and its neighborhood, chiefly at Wandsworth, in the house of a friend, Mr. Falconer, then a respectable Tur-

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much offended because Voltaire disagreed with him: "Who is this young man," he asked, "that, in order to contradict me, speaks so loud?" "Monsieur le Chevalier," responded Voltaire, "it is a man who does not bear a great name, but honors him that does." Chevalier de Rohan, rising from table, went out, and the guests applauded Voltaire. The Duc de Sulli said to him aloud: "We are fortunate if you have relieved us of him."

"A few days after this scene, Voltaire, being again at dinner with the Duc de Sulli, was asked for at the door for a charity: at this word charity, he rises with precipitation, and, holding his napkin in his hand, runs to the door, where stood a fiacre, and in this fiacre were two men, who, in a plaintive tone, begged him to come to the coach-door. He was scarcely there when one of the two held him by the coat, while the other applied to his shoulders five or six strokes of a little stick. The Chevalier de Rohan, who was in his carriage ten paces off, cried out to them: *It is enough.* . . . Voltaire, having entered the *hôtel*, demanded of the Duc de Sulli to regard this outrage done to one of his guests as done to himself. He solicits the duc to join him in pursuing vengeance, and to go with him to the Commissary to enter a complaint. The Duc de Sulli refuses. This indifference on the part of a man who for ten years had treated him as a friend, irritated him still more. He left, and from that moment would neither see nor listen to the Duc de Sulli.

"Voltaire, outraged . . . had recourse to his own courage alone. . . . A fencing-master came every morning to give him lessons; when he had acquired the requisite skill, he betook himself to the Théâtre-Française, entered the *loge* of the Chevalier de Rohan, and said to him: 'Sir, if some affair of interest has not caused you to forget the outrage of which I have to complain, I hope you will give me satisfaction for it.' Thieriot, who is our authority for the fact, remained at the door of the *loge*.

"The Chevalier de Rohan accepted the challenge for the next day at nine o'clock, himself designated the Port Saint-Antoine as the rendezvous, and the same evening informed his family of the cartel he had received. All the Rohans put themselves in motion. They hastened to Versailles . . . . and Voltaire was sent to the Bastille."

Guy-Auguste de Rohan-Chabot, born in 1683, named Field-Marshal in 1719, Lieutenant-General in 1734, died September 13, 1760. He had espoused the cause of Madame Guion, of whom Voltaire speaks in his *Siecle of Louis XIV.*

Voltaire was sent to the Bastille April 17, 1726. He asked permission to go to England; and the order for his release was given April 29th, on condition that he should go to England. He was to set out May 2d, under

key merchant, afterwards Ambassador to the Porte and Secretary to the Duke of Cumberland. During this residence he corrected the "Henriade." Under that name the "Ligue" was now published by a subscription, which Queen Caroline, then Princess of Wales, warmly patronized, and which produced a large sum of money. He likewise devoted himself with his wonted zeal and success to the study of the Newtonian philosophy. He lived in the society of our literary men; though the great age of Sir Isaac Newton prevented him from forming any acquaintance with him whose system he was destined first to make known in Europe. With Pope and with Congreve he had many interviews: for the former he acquired a respect and esteem which the similarity of their poetical genius naturally cemented, and which no envy or jealousy ever interrupted; of the latter, he is said to have formed a less favorable judgment. The silly affectation of telling him, when he came to admire the Molière of England, that he valued himself, not on his authorship, but would be regarded as a man of the world, received a just rebuke: "I should never have come so far to see a gentleman," said Voltaire.

This journey to England had two important consequences. The money[1] which he obtained, and which he afterwards increased by a lucky chance in the lottery, and by engaging in one or two successful mercantile speculations, yielded him an ample income for the rest of his life; so that he cared little for the profits of his works, and indeed gave many of them for

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conduct of a man named Condé, who had been appointed to accompany him as far as Calais.—See l'Histoire de la détention des philosophes, etc., par J. Delort, 1829, tome ii. pages 34 et suiv.

This second detention of Voltaire was then, at most, but sixteen days.

Voltaire, in order to punish the Duc de Sulli for his indifference in the Rohan affair, suppressed, in the *Henriade*, the character of Sulli, and put Mornay in its place.

Condorcet erroneously says that Voltaire was imprisoned six months. It is not a little strange that Brougham has not mentioned the imprisonment at all.—*Ed.*

[1] When Voltaire died he left, besides some real estate, a money revenue of more than thirty thousand dollars a year,—fully equal to one hundred thousand, at this time, and in this country.—*Ed.*

nothing to the booksellers and the actors. Not only was he thus secured in the state of independence which is an author's best protection against crude and hasty composition, but he was able to follow the bent of his taste in choosing his subjects, and of his disposition both to encourage young authors of merit, and to relieve the distresses of deserving persons. Proofs also remain which place beyond all doubt his kindness to several worthless men, who repaid it with the black ingratitude so commonly used as their current coin by the base and spiteful, who thus repay their benefactors and salve their own wounded pride by pouring venom on the hand that saved or served them.

But his residence in England had a still more important result—the importation he made from thence of the Newtonian system, or rather, of all Sir Isaac Newton's wonderful discoveries. So deeply rooted were the prejudices of our Continental neighbors in favor of the Cartesian philosophy, that when Fontenelle pronounced his éloge of Newton, at the Académie des Sciences, he gave the preference to Descartes; and even ten years later, the Chancellor D'Aguesseau refused the license to print Voltaire's work because it denied and disproved the *Vortices*—an act of narrow-minded bigotry in science scarcely to be matched in all its annals. Voltaire, soon after his return from England, published his "Lettres sur les Anglais" —a candid and intelligent work; and in three of these he gives a very correct though extremely general and popular sketch of Newton's discoveries. But in 1738 appeared his more full and satisfactory account of them, and it certainly does the greatest honor to its author. This work owes its origin, however, not more to his English residence than to the intimacy which he formed soon after his return to France, about the year 1730, with the family of Du Chatelet; and before considering the merits of the book, it may be convenient to dwell for a little while upon the history of that celebrated attachment.

The Marquess Du Chatelet had married several years before a lady of high rank, Gabrielle Emilie de Breteuil, much younger than himself; and, according to the manners of those times and that country, she herself had not been consulted upon the

match when her parents gave her away. When Voltaire became acquainted with her she was in her twenty-fourth year, and one of the most remarkable persons, both for beauty, talents, and accomplishments, that adorned the French court, or the refined society of Paris. At first her acquaintance with the poet was of an ordinary kind, probably formed by the reputation of the wit and the rank of the lady. But the literary taste of the marchioness found so much improvement and such constant gratification in the great resources of his various knowledge, his versatile talents, and his inexhaustible wit, that it can be no wonder if his society soon became necessary to a woman of her decided inclination for literary and scientific pursuits. The fame which he had acquired as a dramatist, and in the brilliant circles of Paris society, would have riveted the attention of an ordinary woman, to whom he showed a desire of devoting himself. But though she was herself fond of all the common amusements of her rank and sex, lived in the circles of the court as might be expected of a Breteuil, and cultivated all the graces, even as displayed in the lighter accomplishments, it seems doubtful if she would have formed so decided a predilection for the company of any one who had not begun to cultivate those severer sciences to which she gave a marked preference. Nor can we much question the probability of Voltaire having, after his return from England, turned his attention far more to these studies than he otherwise would have done, in order to make a progress not only in philosophy, but also in the good graces of a person so distinguished in every way—young, handsome, noble, attractive, as well as learned beyond the ordinary measure even of man's information, endowed with talents both solid and ornamental, and inspired by a taste for the graver as well as the lighter pursuits of genius. The difficulties in which he was involved by a lettre de cachet threatened, if not issued, on account of the "Letters" after his return from England, had obliged him to leave Paris. There seems every reason to believe that the arrangement by which he became an inmate in the marquess's house was formed about the same time, and

that he found a refuge at the château of Cirey in Champagne, whither the literary tastes of the marchioness had made her resolve to withdraw from the frivolity of the court and the dissipation of the capital, and had enabled her to prevail with the marquess, who yielded to this new plan of life. They had at this time a son and a daughter; and an Abbé named Linant was engaged as the tutor of the former, while the marchioness herself superintended the latter's education.

The château of Cirey, on the confines of Champagne and Lorraine, had, like most French country houses, fallen into some disrepair. Steps were immediately taken to put it in order, and a considerable addition of a gallery and a laboratory, or cabinet of natural philosophy, was made to it under Voltaire's superintendence. The elegance and even luxury of the apartments is described as very great. He likewise furnished the funds required for the improvements, by lending the marquess 40,000 francs, and by providing a portion of the furniture of the apparatus, and of the library, which became a sufficiently large one for all ordinary purposes. It appears, that soon after the building was finished, he reduced his claim to 30,000 francs, and agreed to take in lieu of that sum an annuity of 2000 francs. Fifteen years, however, elapsed without any payment of the annuity; and though the arrears now amounted to 30,000 francs, he agreed to receive 15,000 both for those arrears and for the remainder of his life-interest in the annuity: of this 15,000 francs it does not appear that he ever received more than 10,000—so that he gave up altogether a sum of about £2000 sterling, principal and interest.[1] But he appears constantly to have assisted the household with money, which the careless habits of the marquess, and the yet less worldly nature of the marchioness, occasionally rendered necessary. The income of the marquess was about 40,000 francs, equal to about £6000 in this country at the present time.

The family appears to have lived together in great harmony

[1] A sum equal at the present time, and in England, to at least £6000.

though occasionally somewhat broken by the rather impetuous temper of the fair analyst. They led a retired, contemplative, and studious, but by no means a dull or unvaried life. Visits were occasionally made to Paris; in Brussels and the Hague it became necessary to pass some time, partly on account of Voltaire's work then printing there, the "Elements," partly on account of a lawsuit by which the family had been exhausted for sixty years, and of which Voltaire's active interposition obtained the amicable settlement, by payment to the marquess of 220,000 francs.

Some of the greatest mathematicians of the age frequented the château, and assisted the marchioness in her studies. Kœnig and his brother, disciples of the Bernouillis, passed two years there; but also D. Bernouilli himself was occasionally a visitor; and so was the illustrious Clairault. Maupertuis, a man of very inferior mark, but esteemed at that time, when his journey to measure a degree in Lapland caused him to be overrated, was more than once the marquess's guest and his wife's instructor or fellow-student. The marchioness seldom dined with the family, whose dinner-hour was twelve: but they more frequently assembled all together to supper at eight in the evening. Though the marchioness was chiefly engaged in her "Commentaries on Newton," and her able and learned translation of the "Principia," she could distract her mind from such studies by the pleasures of music and of the stage; and we find Voltaire telling friends whom he is inviting to visit them, that "plays are made daily, and Jupiter's satellites observed nightly (Cor. Générale, iii. 184); that they will be free to pass the mornings in their own apartments, and will hear read in the evening the compositions of the day; and that the marchioness 'joue ou l'opéra, ou la comédie, ou la comète'" (*Ib.*, 312). Indeed, Voltaire himself exhibited perhaps the most remarkable instance of varied and versatile talents on record, by producing, within the same three or four years, the Newtonian "Elements," his prize essay on "Fire," "Zaire," "Alzire," "Mahomet," the "Discours sur l'Homme," more than half of the "Pucelle," the "History of Charles XII.,"

besides an endless variety of minor pieces, and some volumes of correspondence in prose and verse. The "Pucelle" was begun to amuse him while obliged to fly from Paris in 1734, by the persecutions he suffered on account of the "Letters on England."

It was at Cirey, then, with a few weeks passed in 'Sgravesande's society at Leyden, that Voltaire composed, and finally prepared for publication, his "Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy," as well as his "Essay on Fire;" and of both these works we may now treat.

In order to estimate the merits of the work on Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries, we must first consider the state in which it found the Newtonian system on the Continent; next, the helps which he had in writing it.

There can be no doubt that Clairault, destined afterwards to confirm the theory of the moon's motions, though at first, with others, to undergo a temporary error upon the subject,—destined also to join with D'Alembert and Euler in explaining the disturbing forces by working out the problem of the three bodies,—destined, finally, to bring the disturbances in the trajectories of comets within the theory of planetary attraction,—very early, probably before Voltaire, adopted the Newtonian philosophy; for, though only fifteen years old when Voltaire's "Letters" were written, he had, when only thirteen, begun his admirable work on Curves of Double Curvature, and it was published very soon after the "Letters" appeared. But it is certain that he had given nothing to the world on the theory of gavitation. Maupertuis had probably, in scientific circles, professed his conversion, and intimated that he renounced the Cartesian philosophy; but until after his return from Lapland, in 1738, he never made any public profession of his faith, his "Commentary," in 1732, being confined to the dynamical subject of the 12th Section of the "Principia." (Book I.) Voltaire's "Letters," therefore, published in 1732, first defended generally, and his "Elements," in 1738, defined in detail, the new system, and gave an explanation of it so clear and popular, as in all likelihood neither Maupertuis nor Clairault could

have furnished. He therefore justly claims the glory of first making the Newtonian system accessible to the bulk of European readers, of fully refuting the Cartesian errors, and of boldly opposing a doctrine which, of all philosophical tenets since Aristotle's philosophy, had taken the strongest hold of men's minds. Indeed, the prejudices in favor of the Vortices, like those in favor of the Aristotelian philosophy, appear to have partaken of the zeal, and even of the intolerant spirit, which theological dogmas are too often found to excite. Fontenelle, in his "Eloge" of Newton, had shown his adhesion to Descartes. The Chancellor D'Aguesseau, as I have already remarked, could never be prevailed upon to grant a license for printing Voltaire's work; he kept the manuscript in his possession for eight months, and ended by refusing his permission,—a piece of folly and bigotry worthy of that eminent and virtuous, but feeble character, which had made him also refuse the license to print a novel, unless the hero was made to change his religion and become a Catholic. Even the "Letters on England" had suffered persecution, partly from their opposing Descartes, but chiefly because, with Locke, they denied innate ideas, which the bigoted clergy deemed an approach to materialism, or, at any rate, a doctrine tending to level the human mind with that of the lower animals—a doctrine, however, it must be observed, for that very reason somewhat favorable to themselves. The result of their efforts was a lettre de cachet, and Voltaire's sudden flight from Paris. Another consequence, and one very discreditable to him, was his positive and public denial of the authorship, and affirming that the letters had been written by his early patron, the Abbé Chaulieu, now no more. These letters were first published in London by his friend M. Theiriot, who caused them to be translated into English, in which language they first appeared. He was allowed to reap the whole profits of the work. Afterwards Voltaire gave a bookseller at Rouen leave to publish the original French; but withdrew his consent as soon as he perceived the trouble into which the work would bring him. His countermand, however, arrived too late, and

he suffered great annoyance in consequence. It is usually represented that this book, containing his more general sketch of the Newtonian system, was written as early as 1727 or 1728; but this is certainly incorrect. The letters were in great part written while he was living at the house of Mr. Falconer at Wandsworth; but those on Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries were so far from being then finished, that they were probably not commenced; for we find in the "Correspondance" letters as late as the autumn of 1732, in which he consulted Maupertuis upon the doctrine of attraction, and was wavering between that and the vortices. There are no less than five letters written by him on this subject; and after his objections to the Newtonian doctrine had been removed by Maupertuis, he falls back and sends him a long paper on the moon's motion, dated 5th November, 1732.[1] The "Letters," however, at length appeared, and his own account of that portion of them is at once accurate and witty. "I carefully avoid entering into calculations," he says: "I am like a person who settles with his steward, but does not go to work arithmetically." The "Elements" were written between 1732 and 1736, were finished about that time, and were published in 1738.

The other matter for consideration is the assistance which Voltaire privately had in preparing this work. It is clear that he must have begun his physical studies with a very indifferent provision of mathematical knowledge. It is equally clear that he studied natural philosophy with Madame du Chatelet, who had a particular taste for the mathematics. She had received instruction from Maupertuis; some also from Clairault before he went to Lapland; but she received still more from him after he returned to Cirey. He had fully instructed her in the Newtonian philosophy, and in the method of conducting the demonstrations of the "Principia" analytically—a most invaluable service to any student at that time, when the excellent commentary of the Jesuits[2] (Le Sueur and Jacquier)

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[1] *Cor. Gén.*, i. 244, et seq., and 259; ii. 493, 514.

[2] They were Minimes, and not Jesuits as they are always called.

nad not appeared: she reduced his lessons to writing, and they were afterwards published among her posthumous works.[1] Her "Institutes de Physique" were published in 1740, and contain a very accurate account of the Newtonian system; and as it is clear, from Voltaire's Correspondence, that the work was written before the beginning of that year, it can admit of no doubt that she was acquainted with the Newtonian philosophy at the time he was writing his "Elements;" the printing of which began early in 1737, and continued nearly two years. He therefore derived all the benefit that his knowledge of the subject enabled him to receive from Clairault; and Kœnig lived at Ciery the whole of the years 1738 and 1739, so as to make it very possible that he revised the book while it passed through the press. He admits Madame du Chatelet's share in the work, in express terms, to Frederick II.[2] The access to these helps, however, does not materially lessen his merits. Indeed he had the benefit of Pemberton's "General View," which was published as early as 1728, and is more than once referred to by him. Maclaurin's was not published till 1748.

That Voltaire had, or in consequence of sympathy with Madame du Chatelet acquired, some taste for the mathematics is certain. He even prosecuted the study with considerable assiduity. After making some progress he consulted Clairault, and asked him if he could conscientiously advise him to persevere in the pursuit—to go on with the cultivation of a science which is commonly supposed to require an undivided homage from its votaries, though D'Alembert's example negatives the assumption. We are not informed of the grounds upon which Clairault candidly gave his opinion that the science of number and quantity was not Voltaire's vocation; whether he found him ill-grounded in a branch of knowledge which he had studied late, or saw in any attempts at original

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[1] Voltaire (Mémoires, Œuv., i. 219) erroneously ascribes this work to Madame du Chatelet herself, and says it was revised by Clairault. The "Mémoires" abound in error. Thus they make the journey to Luneville in 1749, instead of 1748.

[2] *Cor. avec les Souverains*, i. 60.

investigation that his genius lay not that way. It is, however, to be lamented that his advice was either given so generally, or so generally construed and followed, as to make no exception in favor of experimental philosophy, in which I am strongly inclined to think, and shall presently explain why, his acuteness, his industry, his sagacity, above all his brave contempt of received opinions, and his deep-rooted habit of judging every proposition by its own merits, would in all probability have ranked him among the discoverers of the age.

The "Elements" is a work of a much higher order than the "Letters," and does great credit both to his industry and his accuracy. It is indeed so free from errors, although it is by no means a superficial account of the Newtonian philosophy, that, with the limited knowledge of mathematics which Voltaire possessed, we can hardly conceive his having avoided mistakes, and must therefore suppose that either 'Sgravesande, with whom he passed some time at Leyden, while the work was in the press, or Kœnig, who was then living at Cirey, must have gone over and revised it. There is no greater mistake than theirs who call the "Elements" a flimsy or superficial work. The design of it is not to enter minutely into the profound investigations of the "Principia," or to follow all the exquisite inductive processes of the "Optics," but to give the great truths unfolded in both these immortal works, with a certain portion of the evidence on which they rest, so that the reader unacquainted with the mathematics beyond the mere definitions, and perhaps one or two of the elementary propositions in geometry, may be able to form an accurate notion of the reasoning that supports the mighty system. The design is this: that design is executed; and the power of explaining an abstract subject in easy and accurate language, language not in any way beneath the dignity of science, though quite suited to the comprehension of uninformed persons, is unquestionably shown in a manner which only makes it a matter of regret that the singularly gifted author did not carry his torch into all the recesses of natural philosophy. It must be added, that, besides explaining the discoveries of Newton, he has given an

equally clear view of the science as it stood before those great changes were effected. The Cartesian system is fully explained, and the outline of optical science, independent of Newton's researches, is more extended and more elaborate than the account of those researches. The second part relates to the nature and action of light; the third, to the system of the world; and the first part enters at some length into the general doctrines of mind, matter, force, and motion, even dealing with the doctrines of natural religion.

Whoever reads the work attentively, allowing it the full praise so justly its due, will find it wholly incapable of furnishing any proof that the author had ever read either the "Principia" or the "Optics." There is no reference to those writings which at all shows that he had ever seen a line of them. In the controversy with the Cartesians, which he carried on after the "Elements" were published, he cites the 96th proposition (meaning of the first book of the "Principia," although he does not mention the book); but it is only to speak of optical matters. He also refers to the *Scholium Generale;* but that has been constantly cited, and for the most part at second hand by those who never read any other part of the work. It is further to be observed, that no account whatever is given, nor even any mention made, of the Second Book, concerning motion in resisting media. Indeed, there are indications more positive of his not having drunk at the pure source itself. If he had been acquainted with the "Optics," in describing the induction by which the composition of white light is proved, he never surely would have omitted the *experimentum crucis.* He gives (Part ii. chap. 10) the composition of the spectral rays by means of a lens, and their forming white in the focus; but he leaves entirely out the decisive experiment of stopping different portions of the spectrum, and then finding that the focus is no longer white, but of the color, or mixture of colors, suffered to pass onward. It is perhaps a proof of the same kind, that he states what he certainly never could have learnt in the "Optics," the blue color of the sky as caused by the great attenuation of the vapors arising in the atmosphere (Part ii.

chap. 12). Nor could any one who had studied the same admirable work have confined himself almost entirely to one portion of it, and give scarcely any account, except the most general, and indeed meager, of the colors of thin plates, and none at all of the colors of thick plates.

With respect to the "Principia," he gives with considerable fulness the doctrine of equal areas in equal times; and indeed, from his account, the demonstration as well as the fundamental proposition itself may be gathered. But then comes this very summary statement of the planetary law: "Enfin Newton a prouvé que si la courbe décrite autour du centre est une ellipse, la force attractive est en raison inverse du carré des distances" (Part iii. chap. 4). He indeed leaves us here to infer, quite contrary to the truth, that the same proportion is peculiar to motion in an ellipse; and he makes no mention whatever of the inverse problem, the deducing the curve from the force—the more important of the two.

There is a profound view given of the irregularity in the moon's motion caused by disturbance (Part iii. chap. 6), and one or two other parts of the treatise deserve the same praise. A possibility exists of these having been written by another hand. It seems difficult to suppose the same very accurate writer could be the author of such passages as we meet with in the defences of the work against the Cartesians. Thus, in the "Courte Réponse aux longs Discours d'un Docteur Allemand," we find him saying he had expected repose, but now discovered that "la racine carré du cube des révolutions des planètes et les carrés de leurs distances fesaient encore des ennemis;" in which allusion there are three capital blunders: the square root of the cube is taken for the cube, the revolutions for the distances, and the squares for the cubes.

In 1737 both Voltaire and Madame du Chatelet were competitors for the prize of the Academy of Science. The subject was, "The nature of fire and its propagation." Neither paper was successful, but both were honorably mentioned by the committee of examination, and both were printed as a mark of approval. When it is added that the illustrious Euler gained

the prize, surely we may well be permitted to say that no discredit could result from being surpassed by such a rival. But Voltaire's paper is of great merit. He takes bold and original views, and describes experiments which, had he pursued them with more patience, would probably have enrolled his name among the greatest discoverers of his age. It is impossible to have made a more happy conjecture than he does upon the weight acquired by metals when calcined. After describing an experiment made by him with melted iron, "Il est très possible," says he, "que cette augmentation de poid soit venue de la matière repandue dans l'atmosphère; donc dans toutes les autres opérations par lesquelles les matières calcinées acquirent du poids, cette augmentation de substance pourrait aussi leur être venue de la même cause, et non de la matière ignée." About half a century later this conjecture was verified, when the composition of the atmosphere was discovered. Had Voltaire followed up his felicitous conjecture by one or two experiments, he would very probably have discovered both the nature of oxygen and the process of oxydation, which last, indeed, he had in general terms described.

Again, how near does he approach to the true theory of fluidity, and even to the discovery of latent heat, when, speaking of the effects on the thermometer of mixing ammonia and vinegar, he says, "Il y a certainement du feu dans ces deux liqueurs, sans quoi elles ne seraient point fluides;" and afterwards speaking of the connection between heat and permanent or gaseous elasticity, he says, "N'est-ce pas que l'air n'a plus alors la quantité de feu nécessaire pour faire jouir toutes ses parties, et pour le dégager de l'atmosphère engourdie qui le renferme?" The experiments which he made on the heat of fluids mixed together, of different temperatures before their mixture, led him to remark the difference of the temperature when mixed from what might have been expected by combining the separate temperatures before mixture. Need I add that this is precisely the course of experiment and observation which led Black to his celebrated discovery of latent heat a quarter of a century later?

It was in these studies that the time passed at Cirey, in these various pursuits of philosophy, of history, of poetry. But some important incidents in Voltaire's life, besides his literary successes, happened during his intimacy with the Du Chatelets. His only sister, of whom he appears to have been fond, had died while he was in England, leaving a son and two daughters. Of these, now grown up, he took a parental care, and exerted himself to marry them suitably. One, in 1737, married M. Denis, a captain in the Régiment de Champagne, who died some years after (1744), and his widow ultimately came to live with her uncle, and passed nearly thirty years under his roof. Her sister married, some years later, a M. de Fontaine. During the same period of his residence at Cirey, the Prince Royal of Prussia, afterwards Frederick II., courted his acquaintance by letter, and began a correspondence of mutual compliment and even veneration, which lasted till he became king at his father's death, in 1740. At that time he made a fruitless attempt to make Voltaire fix his residence at Berlin, and would have almost let him dictate his own terms; but as long as Madame du Chatelet lived, these offers were frankly and peremptorily refused. Voltaire being near Brussels, the king, who happened to be in that neighborhood soon after his accession, proposed coming to wait upon the poet; but, being prevented by a severe ague, Voltaire went to him, and had his first interview while the fit was upon the royal patient in bed. He undertook to publish for him his first work, the "Anti-Machiavel." But unfortunately, while it was passing through the press, the death of Charles VI. left his daughter Maria Theresa in a condition of such weakness as exposed the royal combatant of Machiavel's principles to an irresistible temptation, and he made upon her province of Silesia one of the most unprovoked and unjustifiable attacks of which account has left any record. It is singular enough that, in the history which he afterwards wrote of the war, he in plain terms had stated as the cause of it, his possessing a fine army, and great treasure, which his father's recent death had left him, and his inability to resist the temptation of her weakness. Voltaire,

on revising the work, struck this singular passage out of it but, having kept a copy, he has given it in his "Memoirs."[1]

The favor which he was known to enjoy with Frederick induced the French ministry, three years after, to employ him in a secret mission, which he appears to have fulfilled with much success.[2] He went to Berlin under cover of visiting his

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[1] The passage thus erased and thus preserved is extremely curious, and for honesty or impudence has no parallel in the history of warriors:

"Que l'on joigne à ces considérations, des troupes toujours prêtes d'agir, mon épargne bien remplie, et la vivacité de mon caractère, c'étaient les raisons que j'avais de faire la guerre à Marie Thérèse, Reine de Bohémie et de Hongrie,—l'ambition, l'intérêt, le désir de faire parler de moi, l'importèrent; et la guerre fut résolue." (Mém. 238.) If every man who enters upon a voluntary war would speak out, we should have the same commentary on the lives of all the butchers who disgrace and afflict our species. Nothing, certainly, can more eloquently describe their cold-blooded wickedness than these words of Frederick.

[2] Macaulay's account of this mission is much more reliable. (See his famous article on Frederick the Great.)

"The Court of Versailles, in this peril, looked to Frederick for help. He had been guilty of two great treasons, perhaps he might be induced to commit a third. The Duchess of Chateauroux then held the chief influence over the feeble Louis. She determined to send an agent to Berlin, and Voltaire was selected for the mission. He eagerly undertook the task; for, while his literary fame filled all Europe, he was troubled with a childish craving for political distinction. He was vain, and not without reason, of his address, and of his insinuating eloquence; and he flattered himself that he possessed boundless influence over the King of Prussia. The truth was, that he knew, as yet, only one corner of Frederick's character. He was well acquainted with all the petty vanities and affectations of the poetaster, but was not aware that these foibles were united with all the talents and vices which lead to success in active life; and that the unlucky versifier who bored him with reams of middling Alexandrians, was the most vigilant, suspicious, and severe of politicians.

"Voltaire was received with every mark of respect and friendship, was lodged in the palace, and had a seat daily at the royal table. The negotiation was of an extraordinary description. Nothing can be conceived more whimsical than the conferences which took place between the first literary man and the first practical man of the age, whom a strange weakness had induced to exchange their parts. The great poet would talk of nothing but treaties and guarantees, and the great king of nothing but metaphors and rhymes. On one occasion Voltaire put into his Majesty's hand a paper on the state of Europe, and received it back with verses scrawled on the margin. In secret they both laughed at each other. Voltaire did not spare the king's poems; and the king has left on record his opinion of Voltaire's

royal and literary correspondent, and obtained from him the assurance, that a declaration of war by France against England, then taking the Empress-Queen's part, would be followed by an immediate co-operation with France on his part. The favor which Voltaire thus obtained not only with the ministry, but with Madame de Pompadour, then all-powerful, produced an impression which all his fine writings had failed to make. He was allowed to enter the Academy, from which court influence had before excluded him; he was named gentleman of the king's chamber; and he received a pension of 2000 francs a year.

The tranquil pleasures of letters and of friendship, which form so much the burden of his song during his residence at Cirey, were in the mean time suffering constant interruption, as he would represent, from the libels of persons every way below his notice, but, in reality, from his own irritable temper. The vehemence of the language in which he describes those attacks, makes the reader believe that the charges against him were of a heinous kind, and that the accusers were persons of importance; when both are examined, they generally turn out to be equally insignificant. One attack only, which absurdly accuses him of having failed to account for subscriptions to the "Henriade," he did right in requiring a friend to refute, who was personally acquainted with the whole matter, having devoted to his own use part of the money so received. He seems to have had some ground for complaining that this gentleman, a M. Theiriot, was slow in vindicating him; but his principal grievance is, that Theiriot refused to attack the slanderer in his own person, and to repeat in public what he had so often written privately, that the accuser was the author of other libels against them both, and was the Abbé des Fontaines, a man of some reputation for ability, but leading a life of scandalous libelling, and whose ingratitude to Voltaire was sufficient to stamp him with infamy, as to his kind exertions had

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diplomacy 'He had no credentials,' says Frederick, 'and the whole mission was a joke, a mere farce.'"—*Ed.*

been owing the Abbé's escape from a charge of the most detestable nature. It is, however, a stain scarcely less deep on Voltaire's own memory, that although he firmly believed in the man's innocence, as indeed every one else did, he was no sooner enraged by the ungrateful return his services received, than he recurred to the false charges in all his letters—nay, even by a plain allusion in more than one passage of his poems, of which we have already seen an instance in the "Discours sur l'Homme." He took a more legitimate course of punishing him by prosecuting the libel (a satire entitled "Voltairomanie"), and compelled the vile and abandoned slanderer to sign a public denial of it, and a complete disbelief of its contents.

Under the vexation which such attacks gave him, he was comforted not only by the friendship which he found always in his home at Cirey, but by the unvarying kindness of M. le Cidville, a respectable magistrate of Rouen, fond of literature; by the steady friendship of M. le Comte d'Argental, a man of large fortune, and owner of the Isles de Rhé and Aix, of the west coast, and his wife; by the unbroken attachment of M. d'Argenson, Secretary of State, his brother, the War Minister, and the Duc de Richelieu. It should seem as if Voltaire was, in his familiar intercourse, the better for being kept under some restraint by the superior rank, or other preponderating qualities, of his friends. Some such calming influence was necessary for his irritable nature. Jealousy formed no part of his character; he had a rooted horror of envy, as mean and degrading; he was always well disposed to encourage rising merit and enjoy the success of his friends, perhaps all the more readily when he aided them by his patronage and counsels; but he was easily offended, ready to believe that any one had attacked him, prone to take alarm at intended insult or apprehended combination against him; and as his nature was fundamentally satirical, he was unable to resist the indulgence of the very humor of which he could so ill bear being himself made the subject. Those who were at all dependent on him, his Theiriots and his publishers, found much less magnanimity

than kindness in his temper. With his equals he rarely continued very long on cordial terms. Maupertuis, indeed, had no excuse for his proceedings; but the extravagances of J. J. Rousseau's crazy nature might well have been overlooked, and never should have been made the subjects of such deadly warfare as Voltaire waged against him. The other Rousseau's enmity he owed entirely to himself, as we have seen; it is extremely probable that Des Fontaines was set against him by hearing of his sarcasms on a subject to which all reference was proscribed; and his persevering attacks on Le Franc de Pompignan arose from no cause beyond some general reflections on philosophers in his inaugural discourse at the Academy; nor was he ever just enough to allow the singular merit of some, at least, of the Abbé's poetry.[1] It is certainly one, and a principal, cause of the constant disputes, the hot water he lived in, that he was always writing, generally writing something offensive of somebody; and almost as generally writing something which was likely to call down the indignation of the constituted authorities in Church and State. But had he kept his writings to himself, or only published them anonymously without any confidants, his pen would have less frequently disturbed his repose. Instead of this, he generally began by showing his compositions, often by suffering copies to be taken; sometimes these were published without his leave; but often he allowed them to be printed, and straightway complained when the authorship was discovered. His denials then knew no bounds, either for repetition or for solemnity; and we have seen in the instance of the "Letters on England" how little scrupulous he was in what manner he confirmed his asseverations, by laying the blame upon others. To this double source of the difficulties into which his writings brought him with the government, and of the individual resentment which

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[1] It might be absurd enough in Mirabeau (the elder) to exalt him into the first of modern poets, as our Locke did Blackmore; yet few passages in Voltaire's own writings can compare with the famous simile of the Egyptians, and their sacrilegious abuse of the Sun.

they occasioned, may very many of his quarrels and anxieties be traced.

But another circumstance must be mentioned, as throwing light upon his personal altercations with the friends he at various times esteemed. His nature was open and ardent; he had the irritability which oftentimes accompanies genius, but he had the warm temperament, the generous self-abandonment, the uncalculating effusion of sentiment, which is also its attendant, and which sixty years' living in the world never cured—hardly mitigated—in Voltaire. His expressions were, no doubt, stronger than his feelings; but we know that this strength of expression has a certain reaction, and excites the feelings in its turn; certainly is ever taken into the account when its object makes a bad or a cold requital, and irritates the minds from which it had proceeded, if in no other way, at least by wounding their pride. Nothing can be more extravagant than the technology of Voltaire's affections: "My dearest friend" is too cold to be almost ever used; it is "My dear and adorable friend;" "My guardian angel;" "My adorable friend;" and often, to the Argentals especially, the union of both, "My adorable angels." All philosophers are Newtons; all poets Virgils; all historians Sallusts; all marshals Cæsars. The work of the President Henault is not certainly "*son*," but "*votre* charmant, votre immortel ouvrage;" being the most dry and least charming history that ever was penned, and which never would be read but as a convenient chronicle. The expressions of affection, of eternal, warm, even passionate affection, are lavished constantly and indifferently. Nay, to one friend, a marshal and duke (Richelieu), he says, addressing him as Monseigneur, "Il y a dans Paris force vieilles et illustres catins, à qui vous avez fait passer de joyeux moments, mais il n'y en a point qui vous aime plus de moi."[1] With all this vehemence of feeling and facility of effusion, as well as of exaggeration, there was joined an irritability that brought on cold fits occasionally, and then the snow, or rather the hail,

[1] *Corr. Gén.*, iv. 198.

fell as easily and abundantly as the tepid showers had before descended.

Nothing can exceed his affection for his nieces, especially for Madame Denis; but he must have outraged her feelings severely, to draw from her such a letter as she wrote in 1754: "Ne me forcez pas à vous haïr"—"Vous êtes le dernier des hommes par le cœur"—"Je cacherai autant que je pourrais les vices de votre cœur"—are expressions used principally on account, not of his heart, which was sound, but his temper, which was uncontrolled, and they were used to him while lying on a sick bed at Colmar, which he had not quitted for six months.[1] I shall have occasion afterwards to speak more particularly of his quarrels with Maupertuis, Frederick II., and Rousseau; in the first of which, the chief fault lay with the mathematician; in the second, the great king claims the whole blame; and in the third, Voltaire was most censu-

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[1] Carlyle gives the reverse side of the picture: "What human pen can describe the troubles this unfortunate philosopher had with his women? A gadding feather-brained, capricious, old, coquettish, embittered, and embittering set of wantons from the earliest! Widow Denis, for example, that disobedient niece, whom he rescued from furnished lodgings and spare diet into pomp and plenty, how did she pester the last stage of his existence, for twenty-four years long! Blind to the peace and roses of Ferney—ever hankering and fretting after Parisian display—not without flirtation, though advanced in life—losing money at play, and purloining wherewith to make it good—scolding his servants, quarrelling with his secretaries, so that the too-indulgent uncle must turn off his beloved Collini, nay, almost be run through the body by him, for her sake! The good Wagnière, who succeeded this fiery Italian in the secretaryship, and loved Voltaire with a most creditable affection, cannot, though a simple, humble, and quite philanthropic man, speak of Madame Denis without visible overflowings of gall. He openly accuses her of hastening her uncle's death by her importunate stratagems to keep him in Paris, where was her heaven. Indeed, it is clear that, his goods and chattels once made sure of, her chief care was that so fiery a patient might die soon enough; or, at best, according to her own confession, 'how she was to get him buried.' We have known superannuated grooms, nay, effete saddle-horses, regarded with more real sympathy in their home, than was the best of uncles by the worst of neices. Had not this surprising old man retained the sharpest judgment and the gayest, easiest temper, his last days, and last years, must have been a continued scene of violence and tribulation."—*Ed.*

rable. At present, I have only entered upon the topics which arise during his residence at Cirey.

The same exaggeration that pervades his expressions towards others, is observable in all that he writes respecting himself, whether upon the sufferings of his mind or those, somewhat more real, of his body. He had, unhappily, a feeble constitution, and having taken little care of it in early life, he was a confirmed invalid for the rest of his days; but especially between forty and sixty. He suffered from both bladder complaints and those of the alimentary canal; and his surgical maladies, besides the pain and irritation which they directly occasioned, gave him all the sufferings and inconveniences of a bad digestion. There was, therefore, a sufficient foundation for frequent recourse to the state of his health. But he writes as if he was not merely in constant danger: he is generally at the point of death; and it is observable that the more deeply he is engaged in any vexatious dispute, and the more he has, or thinks he has, occasion to complain of maltreatment, the more regularly and the more vehemently does he describe his alarming, nay, his dying condition. In such circumstances it is a figure never wanting to round a period, or to fill up the measure of his own wrongs, and his adversary's oppressions. It is singular that a man of his genius, one especially who had so well studied the human heart, and painted so strikingly the dignity of our nature, should invariably, and even with the least worthy antagonist, prefer being plaintive to being powerful, and rather delight to be the object of compassion than of terror.

After above fourteen years had passed in the manner which has been described, accidental circumstances led to the formation of an intimacy between the family of M. du Chatelet and Stanislaus Leczinski, formerly King of Poland, and father of the reigning Queen of France. He resided at Luneville, where he kept a hospitable mansion as a great noble, rather than held his court as a prince. He was fond of letters, and, though exceedingly devout, never departed from the principles of toleration or the feelings of charity. In February, 1748, the Du Chatelets, accompanied by Voltaire, went to visit the

king, and were so pleased with the reception which they received for some weeks, that after a few days passed at Cirey, they returned to Luneville; and this Court, small, cheerful, divested of all troublesome ceremony and cumbrous pomp, and presenting the best instance ever known of letters united with grandeur, and literary men patronized without being degraded, became their residence until the fatal event which, in the beginning of September in the following year, severed forever the connection of the parties. The marchioness continued her studies, and labored with unwearied zeal in superintending the publication of her translation of Newton. The manuscript had been so far finished in the latter part of 1747, that the printing had begun early in 1748; but there were many additions and corrections to make, and she worked on it with a degree of industry which is supposed to have seriously injured her during her pregnancy, extending from the month of December in the latter year. On the 4th of September, 1749, while engaged in an investigation connected with the "Principia," she was so suddenly taken in labor that a girl was born before she could be put to bed.[1] In the course of a

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[1] Carlyle's account of this, in which he introduces Wagnière as a witness, is worthy of the greatest moral portrait painter of our age, perhaps of any age. (Essay on Voltaire.)

"Every one knows the earthly termination of Madame la Marquise, and how, by a strange, almost satirical *Nemesis*, she was taken in her own nets, and her worst sin became her final punishment. To no purpose was the unparalleled credulity of M. le Marquis; to no purpose, the amplest toleration, and even helpful knavery of M. de Voltaire: '*les assiduités de M. de Saint-Lambert*,' and the unimaginable consultations to which they gave rise at Cirey, were frightfully parodied in the end. The last scene was at Lunéville, in the peaceable court of King Stanislaus.

"'Seeing that the aromatic vinegar did no good, we tried to recover her from that sudden lethargy by rubbing her feet and striking in the palms of her hands; but it was of no use: she had ceased to be. The maid was sent off to Madame de Bouffler's apartment, to inform the company that Madame du Chatelet was worse. Instantly they all rose from the supper-table: M. du Chatelet, M. de Voltaire, and the other guests rushed into the room. So soon as they understood the truth, there was a deep consternation; to tears, to cries, succeeded a mournful silence. The husband was led away; the other individuals went out successively, ex-

few days she was no more; and the marquess and Voltaire, having retired to Cirey, very soon quitted a place now gloomy with the most painful associations, and went to Paris, where Madame Denis, his niece, came to live with the poet. He continued to occupy the house in which the marquess and he had before lived together as their town residence, when they occasionally quitted Cirey for the capital; and it was now, he said, endeared to him by its melancholy recollections. His niece endeavored to distract his attention from the dreadful loss which he had sustained. It is needless to add how difficult a task this proved. For some weeks he appears to have

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pressing the keenest sorrow. M. de Voltaire and M. de Saint-Lambert remained the last by the bedside, from which they could not be drawn away. At length, the former, absorbed in deep grief, left the room, and with difficulty reached the main door of the castle, not knowing whither he went. Arrived there, he fell down at the foot of the outer stairs, and near the box of a sentry, where his head came on the pavement. His lackey, who was following, seeing him fall and struggle on the ground, ran forward and tried to lift him. At this moment, M. de Saint-Lambert, retiring by the same way, also arrived, and observing M. de Voltaire in that situation, hastened to assist the lackey. No sooner was M. de Voltaire on his feet, than, opening his eyes, dimmed with tears, and recognizing M. de Saint-Lambert, he said to him, with sobs and the most pathetic accent: "Ah, my friend, it is you that have killed her!" Then, all on a sudden, as if he were starting from a deep sleep, he exclaimed, in the tone of reproach and despair: "*Eh, mon Dieu! Monsieur, de quoi vous aviez-vous de lui faire un enfant?*" They parted thereupon, without adding a single word; and retired to their several apartments, overwhelmed and almost annihilated by the excess of their sorrow.'

"Among all threnetical discourses on record, this last, between men overwhelmed and almost annihilated by the excess of their sorrow, has probably an unexampled character. Some days afterwards, the first paroxysm of 'reproach and despair' being somewhat assuaged, the sorrowing widower, not the glad legal one, composed this quatrain:

'L'univers a perdu la sublime Emilie.
Elle aima les plaisirs, les arts, la vérité;
Les dieux, en lui donnant leur âme et leur génie,
N'avaient gardé pour eux que l'immortalité.'

"After which, reflecting, perhaps, that with this sublime Emilie, so meritoriously singular in loving pleasure, 'his happiness had been chiefly on paper,' he, like the bereaved universe, consoled himself and went on his way."—*Ed.*

lost the power of fixing his attention upon the occupations in which he attempted to engage. The first thing which tended to divert his mind from his affliction was the interest he took in a comedy written by Madame Denis, "La Coquette punie." He admitted the talents which it showed, but was apprehensive about its success; and after much consideration he was found to be right in his reluctance to have it produced in public. In the course of two or three months his active mind recovered its elasticity, and he was occupied with the representation of the "Orestes," which, partly, as is supposed, through the cabals of Crebillon, met with a reception at first most stormy, but afterwards was suffered to obtain some share of success.

Many conjectures have, of course, been raised, as at the time much scandal was circulated, respecting the nature of the attachment between Voltaire and the accomplished friend whom he thus lost. There seems upon the whole no sufficient reason to question its having been Platonic. The conduct of the husband, a respectable and honorable man, the character[1]

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[1] "The Marquise du Chatelet," truly says Carlyle, "and her husband, have been much wondered at in England: the calm magnanimity with which M. le Marquis conforms to the custom of the country, to the wishes of his helpmate, and leaves her—he himself meanwhile fighting, or at least drilling, for his king, to range over space in quest of loves and lovers; his friendly discretion in this particular; no less so his blithe, benignant gullibility, the instant a *contretemps de famille* renders his countenance needful—have had all justice done them among us. His lady, too, is a wonder, offers no mean study to psychologists: she is a fair experiment to try how far that delicacy, which we reckon innate in females, is only incidental and the product of fashion—how far a woman, not merely immodest, but without the slightest fig-leaf of common decency remaining, with the whole character, in short, of a *male* debauchee, may still have any moral worth as a woman. We ourselves have wondered a little over both these parties, and over the goal towards which so strange a 'progress of society' might be tending. But still more wonderful, not without a shade of the sublime, has appeared to us the cheerful thraldom of this maltreated philosopher; and with what exhaustless patience, not being wedded, he endured all these forced-marches, whims, irascibilities, delinquencies, and thousand-fold unreasons; braving 'the battle and the breeze' on that wild Bay of Biscay for such a

of the lady herself, but above all the open manner in which their intimacy was avowed, and the constant recognition of it by persons so respectable as the Argentals and Argensons, so punctilious as the Deffands and the Henaults,[1] seem to justify this conclusion. It is well known that, both in former times and in our own, the laws of French society are exceedingly rigorous, not indeed to the exclusion of the realities, but to the saving of the appearances—"Les convenances avant tout" is the rule. It is never permitted, where a grave suspicion exists of a criminal intercourse, that the slightest appearance of intimacy should be seen in public between the parties. Voltaire's letters to all his correspondents, in which he speaks of Emily to some, of Madame la Marquise to others, of Chatelet-Newton to others, giving her remembrances to them, and himself inviting them to the château, all seems wholly inconsistent with the rules of social intercourse observed by our neighbors, on the supposition of her having been his mistress. Perhaps we may add to this the proof afforded by Frederick II. always acknowledging her, and constantly sending his regards to her. It may be noted that when the French king's mistress, Pompadour, ventured, with many apologies, to send him a respectful, even humble message, his good brother of Prussia shortly and drily said, "Je ne la connais pas."[2]

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period. Fifteen long years, and was not mad, or a suicide, at the end o them! But the like fate, it would seem, though worthy D'Israeli has omitted to enumerate it in his *Calamities of Authors*, is not unknown in literature. Pope also had his Mrs. Martha Blount; and, in the midst o that warfare with united Duncedom, his daily tale of Egyptian bricks to bake. Let us pity the lot of genius in this sublunary sphere!"—*Ed.*

[1] Can it be that Brougham was ignorant, when he wrote this, of the well known relation of President Henault and Madame du Deffand? Or, can it be that he regarded such a *liaison* as consonant with respectability?—*Ed.*

[2] An expression which occurs in Voltaire's letter to Madame du Deffand announcing the marchioness's death, seems strange. Though it clearly proves nothing, yet it was an extraordinary thing to say at such a moment. He asks to be allowed to weep with her for one "qui avec ses faiblesses avait une âme respectable."—(*Cor. Gén.*, iii. 365.) In all probability this referred to her violent temper, of which Madame du D. might have heard him complain, as he certainly suffered much under it.

As soon as the King of Prussia learnt Madame du Chatelet's death, he lost no time in desiring Voltaire to come and live in Berlin, now that the only obstacle to this plan was removed; but at first he could not listen to any such proposition. In the course, however, of the next six months he began to feel the former thraldom of the French government and clergy; he was once more plagued with the slanders of the press, which did not even spare Madame du Chatelet's memory; he formed to himself the picture of happiness under a sovereign who protected letters, cultivated them himself, refused all countenance to persecutions of any sort, and had long expressed for him the warmest friendship. He believed he should at length be able to lead a tranquil life of literary occupation; he hoped to enjoy the *otium* and forgot the *dignitas;* and he set out for Berlin, where he arrived about the end of July, 1750.

The arrangements which Frederick II., enchanted with this splendid acquisition, immediately made, were of a sufficiently liberal kind. A pension of 20,000 francs a year, with 4000 for his niece should she join him and then survive him; the rank of chamberlain; the higher order of knighthood, and apartments at the palace of Potsdam, where the monarch lived ten months in the year—seemed an ample establishment, especially when added to an income already larger by a great deal than any other literary man ever enjoyed, for he possessed from his own funds 80,000 francs, or above £3000 a year. The work to be done for this remuneration was to read and correct the king's writings, to be his companion at his leisure hours, and, above all, to attend his suppers, the meal at which he chiefly loved to take his relaxation after the fatigues of the day. That the society of this singularly gifted prince was captivating, we cannot have any doubt. He had a great variety of information, abounded in playful and original wit, somewhat of Voltaire's own kind, was of the most easy and uncerimonious manners, and had such equal spirits as cast an air of gayety over his whole society. It is not a matter of wonder that the man whom he chiefly delighted to honor should have been enchanted with this intercourse, seasoned as it was with bound-

less admiration of his own genius never very coldly expressed, though always cleverly and variously, more especially when we bear in mind the fundamental fact that this host and master, who chose to make himself the poet's playfellow, was a powerful monarch, and covered with the laurels of a conqueror, as well as sustained by the troops and treasures of a prince.

Twelve months glided away in this pleasing dream, for dream after all it proved to be. That which his philosophers never forgot, it appeared that he himself, the philosopher king, forgot as little—his kingly station; and the freaks of the royal temperament, suppressed for a while, broke out on the first convenient opportunity, changing at once the whole aspect of Voltaire's position, and reducing his relation with his "*royal friend*" to the ordinary standard, which retains the "*royal*" and converts "*friend*" into master.

Immediately after his arrival, an incident had occurred which might have opened his eyes to the claw that lurked beneath its velvet covering. Madame de Pompadour had, as has been mentioned, with many roundabout phrases, and with many humble and trembling apologies for such a liberty, ventured to offer her dutiful respects to his Majesty through Voltaire. The very unexpected answer, from one, too, whom oily words cost so little, was—"*I don't know her.*" The unfortunate messenger would have done better to revolve this in his mind rather than very falsely write a report to the lady, in which Achilles was represented as receiving courteously the compliments of Venus. But he had not been four months at Potsdam when he had a fresh illustration of his great friend's character, and one all the more important for his own government that it related to Frederick's treatment of those dependents whom he most favored with his professions of esteem. M. Darget's wife died; the king wrote him a letter, "touching, pathetic, even highly Christian," on the sad occurrence; and on the same day amused himself with writing an epigram abusing the deceased. That accounts of the dissolute life secretly led by the philosophic sovereign had reached the poet cannot be doubted, as he plainly avows that had he lived in the court of

Pasiphaë he would not have troubled himself about her amours.[1] He afterwards entered fully into this most nauseous subject in his "Memoirs." Be the account there given of other parties of Frederick's day exaggerated or exact, one thing is plain, for here Voltaire speaks as an eye-witness, and speaks against himself: the suppers of Sans Souci (the *noctes cœnæque Deum*), so much the subject of jealousy among the scientific and literary men of the court, were disgraced by the exhibition of such brutal indecencies in the ornaments of the royal table, that it requires no small courage in any one to confess having been present a second time after once witnessing those enormities.

But after about thirteen months had elapsed of what appears to have been uninterrupted enjoyment in spite of these wrongs and these drawbacks, an enjoyment not broken by the indications he perceived of the great jealousy which his fame excited among his learned brethren, it came to Voltaire's ears that his informant, La Metherie, a clever, agreeable, half-crazy physician about court, having mentioned to Frederick how great this jealousy was, the philosophic king replied, "I shall want him for a year longer at most; and then one throws away the rind after sucking the orange." From that moment Voltaire began to feel, as well he might, his footing insecure; and he soon found proofs of the extravagant phrases, which he had believed were exclusively applied to himself, being freely and habitually used by the king towards persons of whom he was known to have a very mean opinion. Nevertheless the enchantment continued, and would, in all probability, have lasted until he was actually dismissed, had not a quarrel, in which the intriguing, jealous spirit of Maupertuis involved him, led to a resolution that he would leave Berlin as soon as he could withdraw the funds which he had placed in the country.

Maupertuis was a man of some mathematical acquirements, put little depth, and no genius. He had originally been a captain of horse, and had, on leaving the army, cultivated

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[1] *Cor. Gén.*, iii. 448 (17 Nov., 1750).

science. Having acquired some reputation, he was sent, as has already been mentioned, at the head of the commission to measure a degree of the meridian in Lapland. Clairault was one of the party, and, being a very young man, was of course placed under Maupertuis, then much past the middle age. The successful performance of this service, a matter requiring care and patience, but nothing more, confirmed the theory of the earth being an oblate spheroid, flattened towards the poles; and so puffed up was the philosopher with this poor triumph, that, after publishing a book recording the history of the expedition, in which he carefully suppressed all merit but his own, he actually had himself represented in a picture, with his hands on a globe, in the act of flattening it at the two poles. Frederick, who was wholly ignorant of physical science, was deceived by the noise which this person's name, or his tongue, made in the world, and urged him to live at Berlin, where he was named President of the Academy which the king had founded. It is a striking proof how perilous royal meddling in scientific matters is, that the illustrious Euler was one of the strangers whom his liberalities had attracted, and that over his head was placed the flattener of the poles and the flatterer of the king.

Such a personage was sure to be jealous of Voltaire, whose arrival occurred long after his own place had been taken. Accordingly, we find that he gave indications of this immediately. A month after he came, Voltaire describes him as having become unsociable,[1] referring doubtless to his very different behavior when he lived for months his fellow-guest at Cirey; and before four months had elapsed, we find him painted drolly enough "as taking the poet's dimensions harshly with his quadrant," and "allowing some portion of envy to enter into his problems." In the course of the next year this envy broke out. Of the most intriguing disposition, he used his access to the king for the base purpose of bearing tales against Voltaire. An adventurer, called La Beaumelle, who had been driven

[1] *Cor. Gén.*, iii. 411, 438.

from Copenhagen, where he was a popular preacher, who then came under false colors to Berlin,[1] was taken up by Maupertuis, and both libelled Voltaire, pirated his works, and propagated stories of his having slandered the king. Then came a statement by Kœnig, now professor in Holland, but a member of the Berlin Academy, refuting Maupertuis' favorite doctrine of the principle of least action, and affirming, on the authority of letters from Leibnitz, that it was no new discovery. In truth, Leibnitz had refuted it, as he well might, for, in the form in which he had given it, the principle[2] rests upon an imperfect induction—chiefly on the reflection of light—and is at variance with many other phenomena, and even with the reflected motion of all bodies except light, inasmuch as no other body being perfectly elastic, the reflected line never can be the shortest possible between the point of impact and any given plane. The courtier-president was enraged; he summoned his academicians; he had his case laid before them; he remained absent from the sitting, while an adherent proposed the expulsion of Kœnig, on the ground of his having forged the letters of Leibnitz, because the death of the person from whom he had obtained the copies prevented him from producing the originals. Nothing can well be conceived more outrageous than this proceeding on the part of a scientific body, all the members of which were paid their salaries according to the discretion of the president, and so were more or less dependent upon him. But there was yet a lower meanness behind. Maupertuis, having caused Kœnig's expulsion, affected to solicit of the Academy his pardon and restitution. But this the honest Switzer's just indignation prevented; for he insisted on retiring, having indeed sent his resignation from Holland before he could hear of the Academy's first

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[1] The charge made by Voltaire, Condorcet, and his other friends, respecting Madame Maintenon's Letters, has been refuted by La Beaumelle's family.

[2] Euler, and still more Lagrange, gave the sound view of the doctrine; but Maupertuis must be admitted, though after Leibnitz, to have come near it.

vote. It was another, and an infamous act of this president, to employ his influence with the Princess of Orange for the purpose of depriving Kœnig of his place of librarian to that lady.

It was always an honorable distinction of Voltaire that he instinctively planted himself as a champion in the front of all who were the victims of persecution or injustice, whatever form it assumed. His feelings towards Maupertuis, whom he had formerly all but idolized, and now heartily disliked, certainly contributed to make him take Kœnig's part with extraordinary zeal, and display great bitterness against his oppressor. But we have no right to doubt that he would at all events have been found strongly on his side, the rather from having lived for so long a time under the same roof with him at Cirey. Maupertuis had, as if deprived of reason, recently published some speculations full of the most revolting absurdities, such as a proposal for penetrating to the earth's centre, and another for examining the nature of the human faculties by dissecting the brains of various races of men. The field thus afforded for satire, what witty enemy could forbear to enter? Least of all, certainly, could one like Voltaire refrain. His defence of Kœnig consisted in part of a bitter satire on the president, which soon made the round of the European literary circles, was greedily devoured on account of a superscription the fittest of the age to give it currency, and was relished far more from the gratification its scurrility afforded to malice, than from any intrinsic merit which it possessed. It is among the poorest and the most tedious of its author's pieces; and when it is said to have destroyed Maupertuis' reputation, whoever reads it must feel satisfied of its utter impotence to injure any one but its author, had that reputation rested upon a solid foundation. Unfortunately for Maupertuis, he had been placed high, with very moderate pretensions; he had exposed himself to just censure by his treatment of a modest, an able, and a learned man; he had covered himself with ridicule by writings which seemed to argue a deprivation of reason; and it required

not the "Diatribe of Dr. Akakia" to hurl him from the place which he usurped.[1]

Frederick committed on this occasion his second error respecting this unfortunate person; but it was a far more fatal one than the former. He chose to enter himself into the strife as a combatant, and he was wholly unprovided with resources. He published a pamphlet against Kœnig and Voltaire, in which he betrayed, as might be expected, entire ignorance of the subject. All scientific Europe took Kœnig's part, though it is painful to reflect that the man at the head of it sided with the king and his president; but though that man was Euler, he was one of the Academy who had been drawn into the shameful sentence of condemnation. His authority, how venerable soever, proved of no avail; the universal voice of the scientific world was against the whole proceedings of the confederates; and the king was reduced to the humiliation of appealing from the reason of his readers to the authority of his prerogative. He had the incredible folly of causing Voltaire's pamphlet to be burnt by the hands of the hangman.

It was now clear that the tempest had both set in and was unappeasable. The royal disputant had received additional offence from a lawsuit in which Voltaire had been obliged to arrest the court-broker, a Jew, for debt. All explanations were unavailing; he sent back his chamberlain's key and his order of knighthood, and resigned his pension. He wrote a kind of love-verses with them; they were returned to him. He humbled himself in the very dust with protestations of his innocence, when charged with having libelled the king; and, among other jests at his cost, likened his office of correcting the royal French to the functions of the laundress with the royal linen. His protestations, and his extravagant demonstrations of sorrow, were quite enough to disgrace the one

[1] It is generally said that he had at one time the misfortune to be confined in a lunatic asylum; his latter conduct certainly seems to countenance the report.

party, but they failed to appease the other. A haughty and imperious answer alone was given, that "he was astonished at Voltaire's having the effrontery to deny facts as clear as the sun, instead of confessing his guilt; and that, if his works merited statues, his conduct deserved a jail." No spark of pride, or even of ordinary dignity, was raised by this intolerable treatment, but only endless wailings as of one literally dying of a broken heart, mingled with protestations of duty, gratitude, attachment, and pitiful appeals to the compassion of his tender and benevolent nature.

Miserable as this picture of Voltaire's weakness is, we may be permitted to doubt if it is not surpassed in baseness by the flattery with which he so long fed his royal friend. He, no doubt, corrected his bad French, and often objected to his poetical errors, or the sins of his compositions against good taste. These acts of friendship, these real services, it is probable Frederick had enough of the royal author to dislike; and possibly some such feeling may have led to the exclamation respecting oranges. But assuredly he had far less right to complain, than Voltaire had to blush, at the shameful excess of adulation which could make him desire his own "History of Louis XIV." to be "placed under Frederick's Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh, as the servant below the master" (*Cor. avec les Souverains*, i. 756); and after sitting up all night to read it, exclaim, "Mon Dieu! que tout cela est net, élégante, précis, et surtout philosophique; on voit une génie toujours au-dessus son sujet (thus subjecting the owner himself of that genius): l'histoire des mœurs, du gouvernement, de la religion, est un chef-d'œuvre" (*Ib.*, 740). And all this about the worst history that ever was written—tawdry, rambling, conceited, inflated—in a style about as near Livy's or Voltaire's own as that of Ossian's poems.

After a delay of two months, the king's resentment to all appearance cooled, or yielded to his prudence. The leave to depart was granted, and he desired to see Voltaire before he went. A long interview took place, and a reconciliation; in the course of which it is positively asserted that the king

sealed the treaty by joining, or rather originating, several sallies against Maupertuis. During the week that followed before his departure, Voltaire supped every night at the royal table, and on the 26th of March, 1753, he set out. After passing a month at the court of Saxe-Gotha he arrived at Francfort on the Maine, where his niece, Madame Denis, met him. Here they were both unexpectedly and rudely arrested at the instance of a Prussian agent, who demanded, by the king's authority, the delivery of the key, the ribbon, and a volume of his Majesty's poetry. This volume was a privately printed collection; only a few copies had been struck off; and it contained a poem—"Le Palladium," in the style of the "Pucelle," but attacking living characters. As Voltaire's baggage had gone by another route to Paris, both the uncle and niece were detained for some time till the book was recovered; and they were then, and apparently without any pretence of authority, seized, upon leaving Francfort, at the instance of another of the Prussian authorities. They were now imprisoned, under a guard, for twelve days, with every circumstance of insult, to the extent of Madame Denis being forced to sleep the whole time of their imprisonment in a room with four soldiers standing sentinel round her bed, and without any female attendant. It must be observed that the king had written a letter desiring these effects to be returned to him two months before Voltaire left Berlin; but the reconcilement which had afterwards taken place naturally enough led to the belief that this requisition was countermanded. The exactions to which he was exposed during this detention, and the sums taken from his trunks, are stated by him as amounting to the whole money which he had received during all his service at Berlin. This treatment made, and naturally made, an impression upon his mind which no time seems ever to have removed.[1] Had he remained near the king, the same resentment would not have kept possession of him; but he was now beyond the reach both of the royal seductions and the royal power; and

[1] See *Corr. Gén.*, v. 67 (1757), but it breaks out often afterwards.

he vented his indignation in that scandalous chronicle of Frederick's life and manners, which was plainly his main object in the autobiography, composed as soon as he quitted Francfort, and not destroyed after the second reconcilement, which took place in 1757

The style of the correspondence afterwards, when Frederick had him not in his power, and when distance enabled him to see with more impartial eyes the character of his royal friend, affords a contrast to all that preceded, quite refreshing to the admirers of genius. We at last have Voltaire writing like a man, and no longer either fawning like a courtier parasite, or whining like a child in his addresses to the king. Frederick, on his part, never forgets his alleged grievances; he constantly refers to them, but he does full justice to the merits of his illustrious correspondent, in whom he at length finds the more dignified qualities of an independent mind. As to Maupertuis, stung to madness by the merited contempt into which he had fallen through his own folly and misconduct, and discovering how little the alliance of a monarch can avail the party to philosophical controversy, he vented his spleen in a challenge, which he sent after Voltaire, who received it at Leipzig, and returned such an answer as it deserved; though no sarcasm could now make the poor man more ridiculous than he had made himself. There seems no ground for believing the random charge thrown out by Collini, Voltaire's secretary, in his "Memoirs," that Maupertuis had a hand in the shameful transaction of Francfort. Indeed, the blame of that appears to fall much rather upon the low agents employed than even upon Frederick himself, though he grossly neglected his duty in not bringing them to condign punishment.

Madame Denis left her uncle and returned to Paris as soon as he was safe in Alsace, where he had a mortgage or rent charge on the Duke of Wirtemberg's estates; and he remained at Colmar for several months, which he chiefly passed in bed, suffering very much under a complication of diseases. He had no difficulty in going to Paris, had he been so disposed; for there was not any prohibition; the king had overlooked his

going to Berlin, and had even continued his pension and his situation in the household, though he had taken away the place of historiographer. But it seemed as if the cabals he so much dreaded were still at work; and feeling that he could not be sure of a quiet as well as a distinguished reception in the capital and at court, where he had put forth several feelers and been ready enough to worship Madame Pompadour, he remained in Alsace for nearly two years, only going for a few weeks to the waters of Plombières, where his niece and the Argentals came to meet him. He also went to Lyons, where Cardinal Tencin, the archbishop, saw him, and considered himself under the necessity of avoiding his society, notwithstanding his being uncle of Voltaire's dearest friend, M. Argental's wife. The people, however, took another view of the matter, and held festivals in honor of the great poet and wit, by inviting him to their theatre and playing his tragedies before him with the most enthusiastic acclamations. He was now ordered to try the waters of Aix in Savoy, and for this purpose he must pass through Geneva. There he consulted the famous Dr. Tronchin, who at once forbade that mineral, and he purchased sixty acres of land near the town, where he was made to pay twice as much as it would have cost him near Paris. He afterwards bought the villa of Tournay, since called Ferney, in the French territory, and about a league from Geneva. In summer he went to a house which he purchased near Lausanne, called Monnier; and in these retreats, agreeable for their scenery in summer, but subject to the curse of a rigorous climate in winter, he spent the remaining portion of his life.

Frederick was reconciled to him in 1757. He wrote him a kind letter in August of that year, when he had, in consequence of his disaster at Kolin on the 18th of June, been reduced to great straits. This renewed their correspondence. In September he was so much more desperate that he wrote to Voltaire, declaring his resolution to kill himself should he lose another battle; and he said the same thing in the poem which he addressed to M. d'Argens, then in his employ. He became

more resigned after this, and resolved to brave all dangers He says, in one of his poems addressed to Voltaire, 9th October,

> "Je dois, en affrontant l'orage,
> Penser, écrire, et mourir en Roi."

Immediately after (5th November) he gained the battle of Rosbach, in which the French army under Soubise were seized with a panic and fled disgracefully. But aware of his difficulties, he wished to renew the negotiations for peace which he had two months before in vain attempted to open with the Duc de Richelieu, then commanding in Westphalia. The Cardinal Tencin, still a minister, though superseded in active influence by the Abbé, afterwards Cardinal Bernis, had always been averse to the Austrian alliance, which Madame Pompadour, from personal resentment towards Frederick, mainly aided in bringing about; and he employed Voltaire's intimacy with the Margravine of Baireuth, Frederick's sister, to open a negotiation. The letters passed through Voltaire and that princess. Frederick readily acceded to the suggestion. The letter from the margravine on her brother's part was sent in this manner to the cardinal, who wrote, inclosing it, to the King of France. He received a dry answer, that the Secretary for Foreign Affairs would communicate his intentions. That secretary, the Abbé Bernis, did so; he dictated to the cardinal an answer to the margravine, refusing to negotiate, and the cardinal is represented by Voltaire (*Mém.*, *Œuv.*, i. 295) as having died of mortification in a fortnight. The sudden change of tone in Frederick towards Voltaire, happening at so peculiar a moment, the very fortnight before he endeavored to draw M. de Richelieu into a negotiation, leaves no doubt that he intended to avail himself of the poet's known intimacy with the general in furtherance of this scheme. Voltaire had, some days before this revival of friendly relations, been writing of him as he usually did. On the 6th of August, 1757, he had, in one of his letters, said, "L'ennemi publique est pris de tous côtés. Vive Marie Thérèse!" (*Cor. Gén.*, v. 21.)

During the two years of his residence in Alsace, Voltaire had

done little more than correct his works, and publish the "Annales de l'Empire," a history undertaken at the request of the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, and upon the plan of the President Henault's dull work. But at Berlin he finished his "Siècle de Louis XIV.," the materials of which he had brought with him from Paris. He also began at that time his correspondence with Diderot and D'Alembert, then engaged in editing the famous "Encyclopédie," the effects of which he very early foresaw, and to encourage it gave his best efforts, both while at Berlin and after his establishment near Geneva. Whatever we may deem respecting the tendency of the work (on its merits there cannot be two opinions), it is impossible not to have our admiration excited as well as to take a lively interest in the zeal and untiring activity which the aged philosopher displayed in encouraging his young correspondents. On this remarkable occasion he put forth all those qualities which form a party chief and gain over the warm support of his followers—ardor, good-humor, patience, courage, tolerance, activity, knowledge, skill. The "Encyclopédie," as is well known, was, after a few years, no longer suffered to appear openly in France. In 1751, and the following years, the first seven volumes appeared at Paris, under Diderot and D'Alembert; in 1758 it was stopped, at a time when its sale had reached no less than 3000 ("Cor. Gén.," v. 127), and the remaining ten volumes were published in 1765 at Neufchâtel under Diderot alone. The four volumes of Supplement were published in 1776 and 1777 at Amsterdam. All the eleven volumes of plates were published at Paris between 1762 and 1772, and the supplemental volume of plates in 1777. The whole of this great work thus consisted of thirty-three folio volumes. Some of Voltaire's articles are clever, and abound with good reflections. The greater number of them are too slight, having the fault which he imputes to many of the other contributors in his "Letters," when he observes that they are fitter for a magazine than an encyclopædia.

The quarrel with Frederick appears to have renewed in Voltaire's mind the admiration with which, while in England, he

had been smitten for Swift's writings, especially his immortal "Gulliver." He had, while at Cirey, written the "Voyage de Scarmentado," and the "Zadig." "Micromegas" was added soon after his return to France. A careful revision of all these was the fruit of this revived taste for the philosophical and satirical romance. Soon after his establishment at Geneva he finished his great historical work, of all his writings the most valuable, and perhaps the most original, the "Essai sur les Mœurs des Nations;" and he then produced the composition which in originality comes next to it, and in genius is the most perfect of all his performances, the celebrated "Candide." The "Essai" had been in great part written at Cirey, but being printed much later, it was first published in 1757,[1] the "Candide" early in 1759. The former, of course, was avowed, but the latter was studiously denied even to the Theiriots and Thibouvilles, his most familiar friends, though Frederick II. appears to have been intrusted with the secret at the very date of these denials.[2]

The two masterpieces which I have now mentioned, in one respect differed materially: the design of the History was quite original; of the Romance there had been examples before. But in the execution both possessed a very high merit, and a merit of the very same kind—the truth with which great principles were seized, and the admirable lightness of the touches by which both the opinions and the comments upon them were presented to the mind.

Before Voltaire's, there was no history which did not confine itself to the record, more or less chronological, more or less detailed, of wars and treaties, conquests or surrenders;

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[1] It was the fate of many writings left by Voltaire at Cirey, and among others, of some critical dissertations and translations for the Essay, to be burnt by the base fanaticism or low jealousy of the marquess's brother, after Madame du Chatelet's death. The "General Dissertation on History" was written in 1764, and published the year after. Voltaire, in the advertisement prefixed to it in an edition of his works, erroneously mentions it as written at Cirey.

[2] *Cor. avec les Souv.*, i. 796.—*Cor. Gén.*, v. 225, 329.

the succession, by death, or usurpation, or marriage, of princes; and the great public calamities, as plague, or inundation, or fire, which afflicted mankind from natural causes. The proceedings of councils, or synods, or parliaments, were referred to, but chiefly as connected with the wars of the countries in which they met, or the succession or the deposition of the sovereigns that ruled over them. No measure or proportion was observed between the events thus chronicled, in respect of their various degrees of importance, still less was their influence upon the condition of the people described, or even noted. To deliver the facts, to describe the scenes and the actors, relating the events, and giving an estimate of their characters, with perhaps a few moral reflections or inferences occasionally suggested by the narrative, was deemed the proper, and the only office of history. The ancients—our masters in this as in all other walks of literature—painted both scenes and men with a vivid pencil; they gave, too, chiefly in the form of speeches, supposed to have been made by the personages whose actions were related, their own reflections upon events, or the sentiments of those personages which actuated their conduct. The same thing was done by modern historians more formally, in dissertations interspersed with the story. But in all these writings there was one common cardinal defect, one omission equally to be lamented. First, the same particularity of detail, which was desirable when important transactions or interesting occurrences were to be recorded, became tedious, and only loaded the memory with useless facts, when matters of usual occurrence, or of inferior interest, were to be related; yet the historian's duty was understood to require that none should be left out. Next, there was no account given of the manners and habits of the people, the bearing of events upon their condition, the influence of men's character upon their fortunes; it was even very rare to find the conduct of nations described, unless in so far as it might be connected with the conduct of some distinguished individuals; and generally speaking, all that happened to a people while enjoying the blessings of peace—their arts, their commerce, their education, their

wealth, their prosperity or decline, their civilization—all was either wholly neglected, or passed with scarcely any notice, while the most careful attention was given to every detail of battles, and sieges, and individual exploits in arms, of which the importance was often wholly insignificant, and the interest died with the relation. There had at all times, indeed, been some pictures, or rather descriptions, expressly devoted to figuring forth the manners and customs of a particular people. Cæsar had thus described, in a portion of his "Commentaries," both the Germans and the Britons: Tacitus had written a work expressly on the German manners and character. But these were either works apart from history, or episodes in its course; the history of a nation was never considered to be any thing but the story of its wars and its rulers; and what is still more material, these works, excellent and valuable as they are, only give a description, and not a narrative; only a picture without any motion; only the representation of a people's manners and condition at a given time, and not the history of the changes which those manners undergo, and the varying and progressive alteration in that condition.

Voltaire, whose daring genius was never trammelled by the precedents of former times, or the works of preceding writers, at once saw how grievous, in both its branches, was the error thus committed—the reducing all events to one level, and keeping general description apart from the account of particulars—and he resolved to apply the correction by writing a history of nations, giving, in his narrative of events, their spirit and their tendency rather than their details. For we shall greatly err if we suppose that he only supplied the second defect now pointed out, and joined with ordinary history the account of the manners and condition of nations at different stated periods of their progress. He undertook to banish the servile presentation of all events in all their details, according to their succession in order of time; to separate the wheat from the chaff, and the ore from the dross; to seize on the salient points, the really important parts of each period, giving as it were the cream only, and preserving the true

spirit of history; and with all this to give, at every step and in every relation, whether of particular occurrences or of general subjects in any one country, a comparative view of similar occurrences and similar subjects in other countries, or the contrasts which the analogous history of those other countries presents to the view of the philosophical historian. This last characteristic of the work is, in some respects, the most distinguishing and the most remarkable of the whole; for it should seem as if the author never deals with any subject in the history of any one country but he has present to his mind, by the extraordinary reach of his memory, the history of every other which stands in any relation, whether of resemblance or of diversity, to the matter immediately under review.

This work has thus become the true history of human society—indeed of the human race. He limits himself, no doubt, in time, beginning with the age of Charlemagne; but he fixes no bounds of space to his survey. From that period, the middle of the eighth century, to the middle of the seventeenth, upwards of nine centuries, he traverses the whole globe, to gather in each quarter, at each time, all the changes that have taken place in society—all the events that have happened among men—the story of all the eminent individuals that have flourished—all the revolutions that have affected the fortunes of nations or of princes; and neglecting everywhere the trivial matters, however authentically vouched, he fixes our attention only on the things which deserve to be remembered as having exerted a sensible influence upon the destinies of the world. In proportion to the real intrinsic importance of each event, or to the interest which it is calculated to excite, is the minuteness with which its circumstances are detailed. But no event is given in detail merely because it is fitted to excite a vulgar and ignorant wonder; while those things are recorded which are of real moment, although their particulars may seem to create little interest. To the work was prefixed a treatise on the "Philosophy of History," but the whole book might justly be designated by that name.

Such was the design; the execution of it has already been

characterized as marked by the peculiar felicity of the author in seizing upon the more remarkable features of each subject and presenting both the accounts of events or of individuals, and the reflections to which they justly lead, at once with great brevity and with striking effect. But it is also to be remarked, that in the two great qualities of the historian he eminently excels—his diligence and his impartiality. To take an example of the former, we may observe that it would not be easy anywhere to find a more accurate account of the Council of Trent than in the 172d chapter; and there are, in various other parts of the work, marks to be perceived of his having consulted even the writers and authorities least commonly known for the materials of his narrative or subjects of his reflections. A testimony of the greatest value was, indeed, borne to his learning and accuracy by no less an authority than Robertson, himself the most faithful of historians, according to Gibbon's description. Speaking of "that extraordinary man whose genius, no less enterprising than universal, has attempted almost every species of literary composition, in many excelled, and in all, save where he touches religion, is instructive and agreeable," the great historian adds, that had Voltaire only given his authorities, "many of his readers who only consider him as an entertaining and lively writer, would have found that he is a learned and well-informed historian."

Voltaire in no part of his work disguises his peculiar opinions, but in none can he fairly be charged with making his representation of the facts bend to them. It would not be easy to imagine subjects upon which he was more likely to be warped by those opinions than in relating the conduct of Luther and Calvin, and in describing Leo X. and the other Popes; yet full justice is rendered to the character and the accomplishments of Leo, as well as to his coarse and repulsive antagonists; and with all the natural prejudice against a tyrannical Pontiff, a fiery zealot, and a gloomy religious persecutor, we find him praising the attractive parts of the Pope's character, the amiable qualities of the apostle's and the rigid disinterestedness of the intolerant reformer's, as warmly as if the former

had never domineered in the Vatican, and the latter had not outraged, the one all taste and decorum by his language, the other all humanity by his cruelty.

But it is a merit of as high an order, and one which distinguishes all Voltaire's historical writings, that he exercises an unremitting caution in receiving improbable relations, whether supported by the authority of particular historians or avouched by the general belief of mankind. Here his sagacity never fails him—here his skepticism is never hurtful. The admirable tract in which he assembled a large body of his critical doubts under the appropriate title of "Le Pyrrhonisme de l'Histoire," is only a concentrated sample of the bold spirit in which he examined all the startling narratives to which our assent is so frequently asked—an assent, before the age of Voltaire, as unthinkingly yielded. In the article "History" of the "Encyclopédie," we find much of what is now the general faith upon the early history of Rome, but which in those days was never dreamt of. The same unflinching boldness and the same unfailing acuteness pervade all the work of which we have now been discoursing. We may safely affirm that no historical treatise was ever given to the world more full of solid and useful instruction. That there should have crept into the execution of so vast a design, perhaps the most magnificent that ever was conceived, errors of detail, is of no consequence whatever to its general usefulness, any more than the petty inequalities on the surface of a mirror are sufficient to destroy its reflecting, and, if concave, its magnifying power; because we read the book not for its minute details, but for its general views, and are not injured by these faults any more than the astronomer is by the irregularities of the speculum which might impede the course of an insect, as these inaccuracies might the study of one who was groping for details when he should have been looking for great principles. But whoever has studied history as it ought to be studied, will confess his obligations to this work, holding himself indebted to it for the lamp by which the annals of the world are to be viewed.

The example so happily set by the "Essai" was soon followed by the other eminent writers of the age. It had the most important and salutary effect upon the great era of historical composition which now opened. Hume's first volume, "The Stuarts from the Accession of James I. to the Death of Charles I.," had been published in 1754, and had contained a most able appendix, giving a general account of the government, and manners, and condition of the country at James's death. Whether he had seen the imperfect and partial copies of the "Essai" which had been surreptitiously printed as early as the winter of 1753, some months before his own was published, or the still more imperfect publications of many chapters in the "Mercure de France" several years earlier, we have no means of ascertaining. Voltaire himself, in a panegyrical notice of Hume's plan ("Remarques sur l'Essai No. 3," in vol. v. of the work, p. 355), assumes that he had adopted his plan of writing history; and, in fact, the "Siècle de Louis XIV.," of which nearly one fourth is written on the plan of Hume's appendix, had been published as far back as 1751, and was in such universal circulation as to have been repeatedly pirated. But there can be no doubt that Robertson's celebrated view of society (forming the first volume of Charles V.) was suggested by the "Essai," for he intimates that the occasion for his work would have been superseded by the "Essai" had Voltaire's authorities for the facts been referred to. That Gibbon, Henry, Watson, Rulhières, all adopted the new system is clear.

On his other histories we need not dwell; they are in every respect performances of an ordinary merit. The "Charles XII." is the best; the "Peter the Great" the worst. The former has the great merit of a clear, equable, and interesting narrative, apparently collected from good sources, and given with impartiality. The latter, beside its flimsy texture, was written in too close communication with the Russian court to be very trustworthy; and it is not only glaringly partial on points which, while independent and unbiased, he had treated with honesty, but it falls into the most vulgar errors on the

merits of Peter's proceedings.[1] The "Siècle de Louis XIV." holds a middle rank between the two, and it has some of the merits of the general or philosophical history. But how far it can be relied on for perfect fairness is another matter. He himself admits that it was necessary to write at a distance from France, a work which treated of men's conduct whose near relations still lived in the society which he frequented at Paris. "To what," he asks, "should I have been exposed at home? Thirty different correspondences even here have I been obliged to carry on after my first edition was published, all owing to the difficulty of satisfying the distant cousins of those whose history I had been relating." But if any proof were wanting that his distance did not wholly protect him from bias—and, indeed, every one must see that he was likely to feel such motives if he did not mean his banishment from Paris to be perpetual—we have the evidence in such letters as that in which he complains that such a one is not satisfied, but has made remonstrances, and says that of another applicant's ancestor he has not been able to speak so favorably as was desired, but yet that he had gone a good deal out of his way to embellish them (*enjoliver*) as was desired.[2] His admiration

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[1] A contemptuous denial of the charge of poisoning his son, and an elaborate vindication of the Czar's conduct (part. ii. chap. 10), is at complete variance with the "Anecdotes" previously published. He had also in his "Charles XII.," written in 1727, thirty years before his correspondence with the Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine, described the Czar as "cutting off heads in a drunken debauch to show his dexterity." (Liv. 1.) In both the "Charles XII." and "Peter I." we find nearly the same unaccountable credulity as to the wonders related of the Czar's studies—his learning watchmaking, surgery (to be able to dress wounds in the field), handicrafts, mathematics—all at the same time; and Voltaire, who would, in any other case, have been the first to ridicule those articles of popular belief, and to expose the folly of a sovereign learning such things to fit him for reigning, falls headlong into all the common errors on this subject. Peter's quarrels with his clergy, and his subduing their authority, had some hand in producing such errors by captivating Voltaire's esteem; but he adopts them far more implicitly after his intercourse had begun with the Court of Petersburgh.

[2] *Corr. Gén.*, iv. 118.—"Je ne ferai pas certainement de Valencourt un grand homme; il était excessivement médiocre; mais j'enjoliverai son

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of Louis XIV. was no doubt very sincere, and it was not perhaps necessary, in the pursuit of court favor under his successor, to soften the harsher features of his character. Yet there is some partiality to him shown throughout the work. Thus the atrocious butchery and havoc in the Palatinate could not be passed over, and, if mentioned, must be blamed; but the historian censures it as slightly as possible when he says, that at a distance, and in the midst of his pleasures, the king only saw "an exercise of his power and his belligerent rights, while, had he been on the spot, he would only have seen the horrors of the spectacle." (Ch. xvi.)

The best of the romances are "Zadig," one beautiful chapter of which is taken from the more beautiful "Hermit" of our Parnell; the "Ingénu;" and, above all, "Candide." Some are disposed to place this last at the head of all his works; and even Dr. Johnson, with all his extreme prejudices against a Frenchman, an unbeliever, and a leveller, never spoke of it without unstinted admiration, professing that had he seen it, he should not have written "Rasselas."[1] It is indeed a most extraordinary performance; and while it has such a charm that its repeated perusal never wearies, we are left in doubt whether most to admire the plain sound sense, above all cant, of some parts, or the rich fancy of others; the singular felicity of the design for the purposes it is intended to serve, or the natural yet striking graces of the execution. The lightness of the touch with which all the effects are produced—the constant affluence of the most playful wit—the humor wherever it is wanted, abundant, and never overdone—the truth and accuracy of each blow that falls, always on the head of the right nail—

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article pour vous plaire." It appears (*ib.*, 4) that his first publication was a most imperfect sketch, and written when he was without sufficient materials. These afterwards poured in from all quarters, and he extended the next edition a third. But how much matter must have been sent to him of a more than suspicious quality!

[1] There was an interval of several months, as my learned friend Mr. Croker has clearly ascertained, between the two works; but Johnson had never seen "Candide" when he came by a singular coincidence on the very same ground.

the quickness and yet the ease of the transitions—the lucid clearness of the language, pure, simple, entirely natural—the perfect conciseness of diction as well as brevity of composition, so that there is not a line, or even a word, that seems ever to be superfluous, and a single phrase, sometimes a single word, nay a point, produces the whole effect intended; these are qualities that we shall in vain look for in any other work of the same description, perhaps in any other work of fancy. That there is caricature throughout, no one denies; but the design is to caricature, and the doctrines ridiculed are themselves a gross and intolerable exaggeration. That there occur here and there irreverent expressions is equally true; but that there is any thing irreligious in the ridicule of a doctrine which is in itself directly at variance with all religion, at least with all the hopes of a future state, the most valuable portion of every religious system, may most confidently be denied. We have already seen Voltaire's sober and enlightened view of this subject in his moral poems, and those views agree with the opinions of the most pious Christians, as well as the most enlightened philosophers, who, unable to doubt the existence of evil in this world, or to account for it in consistency with the Divine goodness, await with patient resignation the light which will dawn upon them in another state of being, and by which all these difficulties will be explained.[1]

The residence of Voltaire, first at the Délices, near Geneva,

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[1] He appears to have disavowed this admirable work even more carefully than any of his far more exceptionable productions. To his most familiar friends we find him exceeding all the fair limits of denial within which authors writing anonymously should confine themselves. To M. Vernes, pastor at Geneva, with whom he was intimate, he writes, "J'ai lu enfin Candide;' il faut avoir perdu le sens pour m'attribuer cette colonnerie: j'ai, Dieu merci! de meilleures occupations." (*Cor. Gén.*, v. 229.) To Thibouville he says, "J'ai lu enfin ce 'Candide' dont vous m'avez parlé; et plus il m'a fait rire, plus je suis fâché qu'on me l'attribue." (*Ib.*, 258.) Even to his confidant and tool Theiriot he says, "Dieu me garde d'avoir eu la moindre part à cet ouvrage!" (*Ib.*, 258.)

and, when the Calvinist metropolis obliged him to part with that place at a heavy loss, at Ferney within the French frontier, was for the remainder of his life far more tranquil and agreeable than during the more passionate and irritable period which preceded. His literary occupation was as incessant as ever; and, besides some of his lesser poems, the greater portion of his philosophical and critical works were written during this latter time.[1] His relaxation was the society of his friends and the amusements of the stage, a small theatre being formed in the château, and his niece, and occasionally himself, acting in the different pieces represented. Madame Denis had some talents for the stage, but he greatly exaggerated her merit, and even amused Marmontel, who relates the anecdote in his "Memoirs," with telling him on one occasion how much she had excelled Clairon. "J'avoue," says he, "j'ai trouvé cella un peu fort." Voltaire himself had very humble pretensions as an actor, and in his letters laughs at himself, with much good-humor, for these exhibitions. The Genevese purists were scandalized at the near neighborhood of private theatricals, but they occasionally formed part of the audience in spite of Rousseau's exhortations against the stage. They also visited Voltaire without scruple at Ferney. He kept a hospitable house, befitting his affluent circumstances and generous disposition; he received strangers who were properly introduced, and it may well be imagined that the inexhaustible resources of

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[1] About twenty-eight of his works, beside some of the romances and some of the minor poems, were written and published after the year 1758; of the "Dictionary," eight volumes; of the "Philosophy" all the six, except half a volume; of the "Mélanges Littéraires," more than one; of the "Mélanges Historiques," two; "Dialogues," two; "History of the Parliaments of Paris," one; nearly all the volumes of "Facéties:" all but half a volume of the three on "Politics and Legislation," including his writings on the cases of Calas and Debarre; nearly the whole of the three volumes of "Commentaries on Dramatic Works." Besides these volumes there are eight or more thick volumes of his Correspondence; and besides finishing and correcting some of his other historical works, he wrote the "Peter the Great" and the "Age of Louis XV." during the same last twenty years of his life; so that he wrote forty volumes during that period of his old age.

his learning and his wit, as varied as it was original, gave extraordinary delight to his guests. He was fond of assisting persons in distress, but chiefly young persons of ability struggling with difficult circumstances; thus the niece of Corneille, left in a destitute condition, was invited, about the year 1760, to Ferney, where she remained for several years, and received her education. But, above all, he was the protector of the oppressed, whether by political or ecclesiastical tyranny. His fame rests on an imperishable foundation as a great writer—certainly the greatest of a highly polite and cultivated age; but these claims to our respect are mingled with sad regrets at the pernicious tendency of no small portion of his works. As the champion of injured virtue, the avenger of enormous public crimes, he claims a veneration which embalms his memory in the hearts of all good men; and this part of his character untarnished by any stain, enfeebled by no failing, is justly to be set up against the charges to which other passages of his story are exposed, redeeming those passages from the dislike or the contempt which they are calculated to inspire for their author.

During the winter of 1761–62, a scene of mingled judicial bigotry, ignorance, and cruelty was enacted in Languedoc, the account of which reached Ferney, where the unhappy family of its victims sought refuge. A young man, twenty-eight years of age, Marc Antoine Calas,[1] the son of a respectable old Calvinist, was found dead, having, it appears, hanged himself. There arose a suspicion nearly amounting to insanity in the mind of a fanatical magistrate of the name of David, that the young man had been hanged by the father to prevent him from becoming a Catholic. Another son had been already converted, and the father, so far from repudiating, supplied with a handsome allowance. There was a visitor of the family, a youth of nineteen years old, present at the time when the murder was supposed to have been committed; as were the

[1] The suicide of Calas was on the 13th of October, 1761; the condemnation of the father was on the 9th of March, 1762.—*Ed.*

mother and brothers of the deceased, all of whom must have concurred in the diabolical act. The father, besides being sixty-nine years of age, had for some time been reduced to great weakness by a paralytic complaint. The deceased was one of the most powerful men in the country, and nearly six feet high. He was also of dissolute habits, involved in pecuniary difficulties, and possessing and fond of reading books that defended suicide. Finally, it was certainly known that the notion of his wishing to become a Catholic was a pure fiction, and that he had never given the least intimation of such a desire. In the face of all this, amounting to proof of the magistrate's fancy being an absolute impossibility, he ordered the whole family to be cast into prison, together with the father, as accomplices in the supposed murder. The populace immediately took up the subject thus suggested to them by authority, and considered the deceased as a martyr. The brotherhood of the White Penitents (Voltaire says at the desire of the magistrate) celebrated a mass for his soul, exhibiting his figure with a palm-branch in one hand as the emblem of martyrdom, and a pen in the other, the instrument wherewith, as was represented, he intended to have signed his recantation of Calvinism. A report was industriously spread abroad that the Protestants regard the murder of children by their parents as a duty when they are minded to abjure the reformed faith; but that, for the sake of greater certainty, and to prevent the escape of the convert, the sect assembles in a secret place, and elects at stated times a public executioner to perform this office. The court before whom the case was brought, at first was disposed to put the whole family to the torture, never doubting that the murder would be confessed by one or other of them; but they ended by only condemning the father to be broke alive upon the wheel. The Parliament of Toulouse, by a narrow majority, confirmed this atrocious sentence; and the wretched old man died in torments, declaring his perfect innocence with his latest breath. The rest of the family were acquitted—an absurdity the most glaring, inasmuch as they were all his accomplices of absolute necessity if he was guilty

Loaded with grief, and suffering under the additional pangs of their blasted reputation, the wretched family came to Geneva, the head-quarters of their sect, and immediately applied to Voltaire. He at once devoted himself to their defence, and to obtaining the reversal of perhaps the most iniquitous sentence that ever a court professing or profaning the name of justice pronounced. He was nobly seconded by the Duc de Choiseul, then minister. The case was remitted to a special court of judges appointed to investigate the whole matter. The preparation of memorials, the examination of evidence, a long correspondence with the authorities, were not the philosopher's only labors in this good cause: he revised all the pleadings of the advocates, made important additions to them, and infused a spirit into the whole proceedings, the fruit of his genius and worthy of his pious design. In 1765 the decree was reversed; Calas was declared innocent, and his memory restored (*réhabilité*); and the minister afforded to the family an ample pecuniary compensation, as far as any sum could repair such cruel wrongs.[1] This took place in the spring of 1766. The Parliament of Languedoc was, unfortunately, not compelled to recognize the justice of the act which reversed its decree, and it had the wretched meanness to refuse obstinately the only reparation it could make—indeed, the only step by which its own honor could be saved.

When we hear considerable persons, as we used to hear Mr. Windham, argue from the example of the French tribunals that judicial places may safely be sold, let the case of Calas not be forgotten. No men who had risen to the bench by their professional talents ever could have joined the ferocious David in committing this judicial murder. For him a signal and a just retribution was reserved. The reversal of the sentence either stung him with remorse, or, covering him with shame, affected his reason, and he died soon after in a mad-

[1] Thirty-six thousand francs was bestowed by the king, on the representation of the court which reversed the abominable sentence. (*Œuv. de Pol. et Lég.*, i. 315.)

house. The efforts of Voltaire, crowned with success, gained him universal applause. Since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Huguenots had never felt any security against persecution. They now felt that they had a champion equally zealous, honest, and powerful. Indeed, the zeal which he displayed knew no rest; his whole soul was in the cause. He was wont to say, that during the three years that the proceedings lasted he never smiled without feeling that he had committed a crime. The country never forgot it. When, during the last days of his life, in the spring of 1778, he was one day on the Pont-Royal, and some person asked the name of "that man whom the crowd followed?"—"Ne savez vous pas" (answered a common woman) "que c'est le sauveur de Calas?" It was said that he was more touched with this simple tribute to his fame than with all the adoration the Parisians lavished upon him.[1]

About the same time with this memorable affair of Calas, there was an attempt made by the same fanatical party in Languedoc to charge a respectable couple, of the name of Sirven, with the murder of their daughter, a young woman who had been confined in a monastery, under a lettre de cachet, obtained by the priests, and, having suffered from cruel treatment, and made her escape, was found in a well drowned. Sirven and his wife escaped upon hearing of the charge: he was sentenced to death *par contumace;* she died upon the journey, and he took refuge in Geneva. Voltaire exerted himself as before; and though it was necessary that the party should expose himself to the risk of an unjust condemnation by appearing to answer the accusation in the Court of Toulouse, so much were men's minds improved since the former tragedy, that the great efforts of the advocates, acting under

[1] Some unreflecting person has lately been endeavoring to reverse the public judgment in favor of Calas and of Voltaire, by examining the records of the courts in Languedoc; and has published an assertion, that the original sentence on Calas was right. Was any one silly enough to suppose that these courts would preserve any evidence of their own delinquency?

Voltaire's instructions and with his help, succeeded in obtaining a complete acquittal.

This happened in the year 1762. The year after, another horrid tragedy was acted in the north, although here Voltaire's great exertions failed in obtaining any justice against the overwhelming weight of the Parliament of Paris, which basely countenanced the iniquity of the court below. A crucifix was found to have been insulted in the night on the bridge of Abbeville. Two young men, D'Etallonde and the Chevalier La Barre, were accused of this offence on mere vague suspicion, by the spite of a tradesman who owed them some grudge. The former made his escape; the latter, a youth of seventeen, and highly connected, ventured to stand his trial. Other charges were coupled with the main accusation, all resolving themselves into alleged irreverent behavior at taverns, and in other private societies. The court pronounced La Barre guilty, and condemned him to suffer the rack, to have his tongue torn out, and then to be beheaded. This infernal sentence was executed upon the miserable youth. The courage shown by Voltaire in exerting himself for La Barre was the more to be admired, that one of the charges against the chevalier was the having a work of his own in his possession, and treating it with peculiar veneration. This proved, however, to be a groundless suggestion. It was infinitely to Frederick's honor, that when Voltaire asked his countenance and protection for the other young gentleman who had fled and been condemned *par contumace*, he gave him a company, promoted him as an engineer, settled a pension upon him, and afterwards made his fortune in the Prussian army.[1]

It would be gratifying could we assert with truth, that the same love of liberty and justice marked every part of his conduct during the latter years of his illustrious life. One great

[1] In addition to the other atrocities of this case, was the incompetency of the Abbeville tribunal. Of the three judges, one was connected with the prosecutor; another had quitted the profession and become a dealer in cattle, had a sentence against him, and was afterwards declared incapable of holding any office.

exception is to be found in the correspondence with Frederick and the Empress Catherine of Russia, at the period of their execrable partition of Poland in 1772. He treats that foul crime not only with no reprobation, but even with flattering approval; and, in one of his letters, he describes the empress's share in it as "noble and useful, and consistent with strict justice."[1]

We have examined the history of his two celebrated quarrels, those with Frederick and Maupertuis;[2] and have now contemplated his humane and charitable exertion for the Calas, the Sirvens, and the La Barres; but his other quarrel reflects less honor on him. His behavior towards Rousseau cannot be said to do much credit either to his temper or his humanity. Rousseau, younger by eighteen years than Voltaire, and dazzled by his brilliant reputation, had paid him a court by no means niggardly, yet not subject to the charge of flattery. Voltaire had returned his civilities, as was his wont, with good interest. Rousseau, on the Lisbon poem appearing, wrote an answer in a long, eloquent, and ill-reasoned letter to Voltaire, which he never made public, but it came into print by some accident yet unaccounted for. Voltaire had, in a note, half jocose and quite kind, declined the controversy, as he had before declined to discuss the benefits of civilization and learning with the same antagonist. Rousseau had, previously to the letter appearing, written an attack upon the theatre, and was supposed by Voltaire to have stirred up the people of Geneva against him, partly on that account, and partly because of his infidel opinions. Rousseau now, in 1760, addressed a letter to him full of bitter complaints, laying to his door the moral destruction, as he calls it, of Geneva (meaning by the Ferney theatricals), his own

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[1] See his verses about kings dividing their cake (*Cor. avec les Souv.*, ii. 92), and his rejoicing in having lived to see "the great event" (93). To Catherine he says, she has, by her "parti noble et utile, rendu à chacun ce que chacun croit lui appartenir, en commençant par elle-même." (*Ib.*, ii. 618.) Again he says, "Le dernier acte de votre grande tragédie parait bien beau." (*Ib.*, 627.)

[2] Further on we have introduced an account of Voltaire's relation to Frederick and Maupertuis, from the brilliant pen of Macaulay.—*Ed.*

proscription there, and his banishment from his native country, rendered insupportable by the neighborhood of Ferney (Confessions, Part ii., book x.) To this letter Voltaire very properly returned no answer; he treats it as the effusion of a distempered mind, in all the allusions to it which we find among his letters. But he always asserted, that the charge of injuring the writer of it was so far from being well-founded, that he had uniformly supported him among his bigoted countrymen. Be this as it may, we find ever after the most unmeasured and unmerciful abuse of Rousseau as often as he is mentioned; and the dull but malignant poem, "Guerre civile de Genève," contains a more fierce and cruel attack upon this poor man than is to be found upon any other person in that or any of Voltaire's satires. It is not to be forgotten that the constant undervaluing of Rousseau's genius can scarcely be ascribed to any thing but jealousy, if not of his talents, yet of his success. He can see no merit whatever in any of these writings, except the "Profession de Foi," in the "Emile;" and of that he only speaks as an exception to their general worthlessness; whereas we know that he felt the greatest jealousy of the courage which it displayed in attacking religion openly, while he had himself never ventured upon any but covert, anonymous assaults, always disavowed as soon as repelled or reprobated. Rousseau's conduct towards Voltaire was a great contrast to this. To the end of his life he avowed the most unrestrained admiration of that great genius; he subscribed to his statue erected at Lyons—an act which Voltaire was silly enough to resent, affecting to think that the Duc de Choiseul, whose name was at the head of the subscription, might not like being in such company. Finally, when "Irène," his last composition, was represented a few weeks before his death, Rousseau generously declared, on some one mentioning the decline of genius which it indicated, that it would be equally inhuman and ungrateful in the public to observe such a thing, even if it were unquestionably true.

That the genius of the poet had in some degree suffered by the lapse of so many years, who can doubt? Yet the "Irène,"

finished two months before his death, and the "Agathocles," which he had not finished when he died, contain passages of great splendor and beauty; nor was there ever, it may truly be asserted, a poet at the age of eighty-four capable of so signal an exertion. It is, indeed, only one of the many proofs which remain of the inextinguishable activity of his great mind. He added a passage to the introductory chapters of his "Louis XIV.," which shows that it was written a few weeks before his decease, for it gives an account of Hook's publication which appeared in 1778.[1].

After an absence of above seven-and-twenty years he revisited Paris with his niece, who, at the beginning of 1778, wished to accompany thither a young lady, recently married to M. Vilette. Voltaire had just finished "Irène," and had a desire to see its representation. The reception he met with in every quarter was enthusiastic. He had outlived all his enemies, all his detractors, all his quarrels. The Academy, which had, under the influence of court intrigues, now long forgotten, delayed his admission till his fifty-second year, seemed now anxious to repair its fault, and received him with honors due rather to the great chief, than to a fellow-citizen, in the commonwealth of letters. All that was most eminent in station or most distinguished in talents—all that most shone in society or most ruled at court, seemed to bend before him. The homage of every class and of every rank was tendered to him, and it seemed as if one universal feeling prevailed, the desire of having it hereafter to say—"I saw Voltaire." But, in a peculiar manner, his triumphant return was celebrated at the theatre. Present at the third night of "Irène," all eyes were turned from the stage to the poet, whose looks, not those of the actors, were watched from the rising to the falling of the curtain. Then his bust was seen on the stage: it was crowned with chaplets, amid the shouts and the tears of the audience. He left the house, and hundreds pressed forward to aid his feeble steps as he retired to his carriage. No one was suffered

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[1] *Siècle de Louis* XIV., i. p. 25.

to sustain him above an instant—all must enjoy the honor of having once supported Voltaire's arm. Countless multitudes attended him to his apartments, and as he entered they knelt to kiss his garments. The cries of "*Vive Voltaire!*" "*Vive la Henriade!*" "*Vive Zaire!*" rent the air. The aged poet's heart was moved with tenderness. "On veut" (he feebly cried)—"on veut me faire mourir de plaisir! On m'étouffe de roses!"[1]

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[1] Considered with reference to the world at large, this journey is further remarkable. It is the most splendid triumph of that nature recorded in these ages; the loudest and showiest homage ever paid to what we moderns call Literature; to a man that had merely thought, and published his thoughts. Much false tumult, no doubt, there was in it; yet also a certain deeper significance. It is interesting to see how universal and eternal in man is love of wisdom; how the highest and the lowest, how supercilious princes, and rude peasants, and all men, must alike show honor to Wisdom, or the appearance of Wisdom; nay, properly speaking, can show honor to nothing else. For it is not in the power of all Xerxes' hosts to bend one thought of our proud heart: these "may destroy the case of Anaxarchus; himself they cannot reach;" only to spiritual worth can the spirit do reverence; only in a soul deeper and better than ours can we see any heavenly mystery, and in humbling ourselves feel ourselves exalted. That the so ebullient enthusiasm of the French was in this case perfectly well directed, we cannot undertake to say; yet we rejoice to see and know that such a principle exists perennially in man's inmost bosom, that there is no heart so sunk and stupefied, none so withered and pampered, but the felt presence of a nobler heart will inspire it and lead it captive.

"Few royal progresses, few Roman triumphs, have equalled this long triumph of Voltaire. On his journey, at Bourg-en-Bresse, 'he was recognized,' says Wagnière, 'while the horses were changing, and in a few moments the whole town crowded about the carriage; so that he was forced to lock himself for some time in a room of the inn.' . . . At Dijon, there were persons of distinction that wished even to dress themselves as waiters, that they might serve him at supper, and see him by this stratagem.

"'At the barrier of Paris,' continues Wagnière, 'the officers asked if we had nothing with us contrary to the king's regulations. "On my word, gentlemen" (Ma foi, messieurs), replied M. de Voltaire, "I believe there is nothing contraband here except myself." I alighted from the carriage, that the inspector might more readily examine it. One of the guards said to his comrade: "C'est pardieu! M. de Voltaire." He plucked at the coat of the person who was searching, and repeated the same words, looking fixedly at me. I could not help laughing; then all gazing with the greatest astonishment mingled with respect, begged M. de Voltaire to pass on whither he pleased.' (Vol i. p. 121.)

"Intelligence soon circulated over Paris; scarcely could the arrival of

Franklin was in Paris on Voltaire's arrival, as envoy from the revolted colonies, and was soon presented to him. Voltaire had long ceased to speak our language, but he for some time made the attempt, and added, "Je n'ai pû résister au désir de

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Kien-Long, or the Grand Lama of Thibet, have excited greater ferment. Poor Longchamp, demitted or rather dismissed from Voltaire's service, eight-and-twenty years before, and now, as a retired map-dealer (having resigned in favor of his son), living quietly 'dans un petit logement à part,' a fine smooth, garrulous old man,—heard the news next morning in his remote *logement*, in the Estrapade; and instantly huddled on his clothes, though he had not been out for two days, to go and see what truth was in it.

"By dint of address, Longchamp, in process of time, contrived to see his old master; had an interview of ten minutes; was for falling at his feet; and wept, with sad presentiments, at parting. Ten such minutes were a great matter; for Voltaire had his levees, and couchees, more crowded than those of any emperor; princes and peers thronged his ante-chamber; and when he went abroad, his carriage was as the nucleus of a comet, whose train extended over whole districts of the city. He himself, says Wagnière, expressed dissatisfaction at much of this. Nevertheless, there were some plaudits, which, as he confessed, went to his heart. Condorcet mentions that once a person in the crowd inquiring who this great man was, a poor woman answered, 'C'est sauveur des Calas.' Of a quite different sort was the tribute paid him by a quack, in the Place Louis XV., haranguing a mixed multitude on the art of juggling with cards: 'Here, gentlemen,' said he, 'is a trick I learned at Ferney, from that great man who makes so much noise among you, that famous M. de Voltaire, the master of us all!' In fact, mere gaping curiosity, and even ridicule, was abroad as well as real enthusiasm. The clergy too were recoiling into ominous groups; already some Jesuitic drums ecclesiastic had beat to arms.

"Figuring the lean, tottering, lonely old man in the midst of all this, how he looks into it, clear and alert, though no longer strong and calm, we feel drawn towards him by some tie of affection, of kindly sympathy. Longchamp says he appeared 'extremely worn, though still in the possession of all his senses, and with a very firm voice.' The following little sketch, by a hostile journalist of the day, has fixed itself deeply with us:

"'M. de Voltaire appeared in full dress, on Tuesday, for the first time since his arrival in Paris. He had on a red coat lined with ermine; a large peruke, in the fashion of Louis XIV., black, unpowdered; and in which his withered figure was so buried, that you saw only his two eyes shining like carbuncles. His head was surmounted by a square red cap in the form of a crown, which seemed only laid on. He had in his hand a small nibbed cane; and the public of Paris, not accustomed to see him in this accoutrement, laughed a good deal. This personage, singular in all, wishes doubtless to have nothing in common with ordinary men.'

"This head—this wondrous microcosm in the Grande peruque à la

parler un moment la langue de M. Franklin." The philosopher presented his grandson, and asked a blessing: "God and liberty," said Voltaire, "is the only one fitting for Franklin's children." These two great men met again at a public sitting of

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Louis XIV.—was so soon to be distenanted of all its cunning gifts; these eyes, shining like carbuncles, were so soon to be closed in a long night! We must now give the coronation ceremony, of which the reader may have heard so much: borrowing from this same skeptical hand, which, however, is vouched for by Wagnière: as, indeed, La Harpe's more heroical narrative of that occurrence is well known, and hardly differs from the following, except in style:

"'On Monday, M. de Voltaire, resolving to enjoy the triumph which had been so long promised him, mounted his carriage, that azure-colored vehicle, bespangled with gold stars, which a wag called the chariot of the empyrean; and so repaired to the Académie Française, which that day had a special meeting. Twenty-two members were present. None of the prelates, abbés, or other ecclesiastics, who belong to it, would attend, or take part in these singular deliberations. The sole exceptions were the Abbés de Boismont and Milot; the one a court rake-hell (roué), with nothing but the guise of his profession, the other a varlet (cuistre), having no favor to look for, either from the Court or the Church.

"'The Académie went out to meet M. de Voltaire: he was led to the director's seat, which that office-bearer and the meeting invited him to accept. His portrait had been hung up above it. The company, without drawing lots, as is the custom, proceeded to work, and named him, by acclamation, director for the April quarter. The old man, once set agoing, was about to talk a great deal; but they told him, that they valued his health too much to hear him—that they would reduce him to silence. M. D'Alembert accordingly occupied the session, by reading his *Eloge de Despreaux*, which had already been communicated on a public occasion, and where he had inserted various flattering things for the present visitor.

"'M. de Voltaire then signified a wish to visit the secretary of the Académie, whose apartments are above. With this gentleman he stayed some time; and at last set out for the Comédie Française. The court of the Louvre, vast as it is, was full of people waiting for him. So soon as his notable vehicle came in sight, the cry arose, *Le Voilà!* The Savoyards, the apple-women, all the rabble of the quarter, had assembled there: and the acclamations, *Vive Voltaire!* resounded as if they would never end. The Marquis de Villette, who had arrived before, came to hand him out of his carriage, where the Procureur Clos was seated beside him: both these gave him their arms, and could scarcely extricate him from the press. On his entering the playhouse, a crowd of more elegance, and seized with true enthusiasm for genius, surrounded him: the ladies, above all, threw themselves in his way, and stopped it, the better to look at him; some were seen squeezing forward to touch his clothes, some plucking hair from his

the Academy, and when they took their places side by side, and shook hands together, a burst of applause involuntarily rose from the whole assembly.

During his short stay at Paris, Voltaire showed his unwea-

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fur. M. le Duc de Chatres, not caring to advance too near, showed, though at a distance, no less curiosity than others.

"'The saint, or rather the god, of the evening, was to occupy the box belonging to the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, opposite that of the Comte d'Artois. Madame Denis and Madame de Villette were already there; and the pit was in convulsions of joy, awaiting the moment when the poet should appear. There was no end till he placed himself on the front seat, beside the ladies. Then rose a cry, *La Couronne!* and Brizard, the actor, came and put the garland on his head. 'Ah, Heaven! will you kill me, then?'—(*Ah, Dieu! nous voulez donc me faire mourir!*)—cried M. de Voltaire, weeping with joy, and resisting this honor. He took the crown in his hand, and presented it to Belle-et-bonne: she withstood; and the Prince de Beauvau, seizing the laurel, replaced it on the head of our Sophocles, who could refuse no longer.

"'The piece (*Irène*) was played, and with more applause than usual, though scarcely with enough to correspond to this triumph of its author. Meanwhile the players were in straits as to what they should do; and during their deliberations the tragedy ended; the curtain fell, and the tumult of the people was extreme, till it rose again, disclosing a show like that of the *Centénaire*. M. de Voltaire's bust, which had been placed shortly before in the *foyer* (green-room) of the Comédie Française, had been brought upon the stage, and elevated on a pedestal; the whole body of comedians stood around it in a semicircle, with palms and garlands in their hands: there was a crown already on the bust. The pealing of musical flourishes, of drums, of trumpets, had announced the ceremony; and Madame Vestris held in her hand a paper, which was soon understood to contain verses, lately composed by the Marquis de Saint-Marc. She recited them with an emphasis proportioned to the extravagance of the scene. . . . . .

"'This was encored: the actress recited it again. Next, each of them went forward and laid his garland around the bust. Mademoiselle Fanier, in a fanatical ecstasy, kissed it, and all the others imitated her.

"'This long ceremony, accompanied with infinite *vivats*, being over, the curtain again dropped; and when it rose for *Nanine*, one of M. de Voltaire's comedies, his bust was seen on the right-hand side of the stage, where it remained during the whole play.

"'M. le Comte d'Artois did not choose to show himself too openly; but being informed, according to his orders, as soon as M. de Voltaire appeared in the theatre, he had gone thither incognito; and it is thought that the old man, once when he went out for a moment, had the honor of a short interview with his royal highness.

"'*Nanine* finished, comes a new hurly-burly—a new trial for the modesty

ried activity of mind, increased, if possible, by the transports with which his fellow-citizens everywhere received him. He planned an antidote to the errors which the admitted probity as well as the rare opportunities of the Duc de St. Simon were calculated to propagate in his "Memoirs," still kept secret, but destined soon to see the light.[1] He worked at his "Agathocles;" he corrected many parts of his historical works; and he prevailed upon the Académie Française to prepare its "Dictionary" upon the novel plan of following each word in the different senses given it at successive periods, and illustrating each by choice passages from contemporary authors. He proposed that each academician should take a letter, and he began himself strenuously to work upon letter A. These labors, and the excitement of the reception at the theatre, proved too much for his remaining strength, and he was seized with a

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of our philosopher! He had got into his carriage, but the people would not let him go; they threw themselves on the horses, they kissed them: some young poets even cried to unyoke these animals, and draw the modern Apollo home with their own arms; unhappily there were not enthusiasts enough to volunteer this service, and he at last got leave to depart, not without *vivats*, which he may have heard on the Pont-Royal, and even in his own house. . . . . .

"'M. de Voltaire, on reaching home, wept anew; and modestly protested that if he had known the people were to play so many follies, he would not have gone.'

"On all these wonderful proceedings we shall leave our readers to their own reflections; remarking only, that this happened on the 30th of March (1778), and on the 30th of May, about the same hour, the object of such extraordinary adulation was in the article of death; the hearse already prepared to receive his remains, for which even a grave had to be stolen. 'He expired,' says Wagnière, 'about a quarter past eleven at night, with the most perfect tranquillity, after having suffered the cruellest pains in consequence of those fatal drugs which his own imprudence, and especially that of the persons who should have looked to it, made him swallow. Ten minutes before his last breath, he took the hand of Morand, his valet-de-chambre, who was watching by him, pressed it, and said, *Adieu, mon cher Morand, je me meurs*—(Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone). These are the last words uttered by M. de Voltaire.'"—*Ed.*

[1] Some days after his triumph at the Théâtre Française, Voltaire was made a Free Mason. In the *acta Latomorum*, published in 1815, we read (vol. i. p. 133), that Voltaire was initiated June 17. It is a very grave error, since Voltaire died May 30th. His initiation was April 7.—*Ed.*

spitting of blood. A new exertion, made in the hope of obviating certain objections taken at the Academy to his plan of the "Dictionary," brought on sleeplessness, and he took opium in too considerable doses. Condorcet says[1] that a servant mistook one of the doses, and that the mistake was the immediate cause of his death, which happened on the 30th of May, 1778. He was in the eighty-fifth year of his age.

There have been preserved, and in his own hand, the few lines he wrote to Lally Tolendal, four days before his death, that he died happy on hearing the reversal of the iniquitous sentence against his father, in whose cause he had exerted himself twelve years before with his wonted zeal and perseverance. Some very good verses, addressed ten days before to the Abbé de l'Atteignant, in the same measure in which he had written some verses to Voltaire, attest the extraordinary vigor in which his faculties remained to the last.[2]

While in his last illness the clergy had come round him; and as all the philosophers of that period appear to have felt particularly anxious that no public stigma should be cast upon them by a refusal of Christian burial, they persuaded him to undergo confession and absolution. He had a few weeks be-

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[1] Condorcet says no such thing. The following is what Condorcet does say: "He took opium several times, and was deceived in the doses, probably on account of the inebriation which the first doses had produced. The same accident had happened to him thirty years before, and it caused fear for his life. This time his exhausted strength was not sufficient to resist the poison." Wagnière relates that Voltaire, being indisposed, sent for an apothecary, who came with a liquor that the old man did not wish to take, but, notwithstanding, did take a portion of it. Madame de Saint-Julien, who tasted of this liquor, said that it was so sharp that it burned her tongue. Voltaire, finding himself in a terrible agitation, sent to the Marshal du Richelieu, to ask him for his prepared opium. "It has been pretended," adds Wagnière, "that after M. de Voltaire had been made to take a good dose of this opium, the bottle was broken. I have not been able to clearly determine this last fact; I only know that they all united in assuring the patient that he had drunk it all. M. de Villette said that he had seen Voltaire swallow the whole of it alone in his chamber. Madame de Saint-Julien then said to him, that he was very much to blame for not having rushed to hinder him."—*Ed.*

[2] *Cor. Gén.*, xi. 627, 628.

fore submitted to this ceremony, and professed to die in the Catholic faith, in which he was born—a ceremony which M. Condorcet may well say gave less edification to the devout than it did scandal to the free-thinkers. The curé (rector) of St. Sulpice had, on this being related, made inquiry, and found the formula too general; he required the Abbé Gauthier, who had performed the office, to insist upon a more detailed profession of faith, else he should withhold the burial certificate. While this dispute was going on, the dying man recovered, and put an end to it. On what proved his real death-bed,[1] the

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[1] "On this sickness of Voltaire," says Carlyle, "and his death-bed deportment, many foolish books have been written, concerning which it is not necessary to say any thing. The conduct of the Parisian clergy on that occasion seems totally unworthy of their cloth; nor was their reward, so far as concerns these individuals, inappropriate: that of finding themselves once more bilked, once more *persifles* by that strange old man, in his last decrepitude, who, in his strength, had wrought them and others so may griefs. Surely the parting agonies of a fellow-mortal, when the spirit of our brother, rapt in the whirlwinds and thick ghastly vapors of death, clutches blindly for help, and no help is there, are not the scenes where a wise faith would seek to exult, when it can no longer hope to alleviate! For the rest, to touch further on their idle tales of dying horrors, remorse, and the like; to write of such, to believe them, or disbelieve them, or in any wise discuss them, were but a continuation of the same ineptitude. He who, after the imperturbable exit of so many Cartouches and Thurtells, in every age of the world, can continue to regard the manner of a man's death as a test of his religious orthodoxy, may boast himself impregnable to merely terrestrial logic. Voltaire had enough of suffering, and of mean enough suffering, to encounter, without any addition from theological despair. His last interview with the clergy, who had been sent for by his friends, that the rites of burial might not be denied him, is thus described by Wagnière, as it has been by all other credible reporters of it:

"'Two days before that mournful death, M. l'Abbé Mignot, his nephew, went to seek the Curé of Saint-Sulpice and the Abbé Guatier, and brought them into his uncle's sick-room, who, being informed that the Abbé Guatier was there,—"Ah, well!" said he, "give him my compliments and my thanks." The Abbé spoke some words to him, exhorting him to patience. The Curé of Saint-Sulpice then came forward, having announced himself, and asked of M. de Voltaire, elevating his voice, if he acknowledged the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ? The sick man pushed one of his hands against the curé's *calotte* (coif), shoving him back, and cried, turning abruptly to the other side, "Let me die in peace!" (*Laissez-moi mourir en paix!*) The curé seemingly considered his person soiled, and his coif dis-

curé came and insisted on a full confession. When the dying man had gone a certain length, he was required to subscribe to the doctrine of our Saviour's divinity. This roused his indignation, and he gave vent to it in a very irreverent exclamation, which at once put to flight all the doubts of the pious, and reconciled the infidels to their patriarch. The certificate was refused, and he was buried in a somewhat clandestine, certainly a hasty manner, at the monastery of Scellières,[1] of

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honored, by the touch of a philosopher. He made the sick-nurse give him a little brushing, and then went out with the Abbé Guatier.'"

[1] Condorcet, in his Life of Voltaire, predicted that the clergy would soon lose its dangerous power and *scandalous riches*. His prediction was soon fulfilled. November 2d, 1789, ecclesiastical property was declared to be at the disposition of the nation. France then did what England had done in the time of Henry the Eighth. A decree of March 18th, 1790, ordered that ecclesiastical property should be sold. The *abbaye de Scellières*, where the remains of Voltaire were, came under the order. A decree of May 8th, 1791, sanctioned on May 15th by Louis XVI., ordered that the remains of Voltaire should be provisorily transferred to the church of Romilly, until the National Assembly should determine upon the funeral honors to be paid him. Another decree of May 30th ordered the transfer of his ashes to the Pantheon (such was the name given to the new edifice of Saint-Geneviève). This decree gave rise to a reclamation entitled, *Petition to the National Assembly, relative to the transfer of Voltaire*, an 8 vo. pamphlet of eight pages, which had two editions. It contained over two hundred and sixty signatures, the most notable of which was that of P. J. Agier, then judge (died in 1823), one of the presidents of the *Cour royale* of Paris. Among the signers figured curés, instituteurs, and Jansenists, ecclesiastical and laical. Nevertheless the transfer took place July 11th, 1791. There was given the same day, at the Théâtre Française, a representation of La Harp's *Muses rivales*, with which verses relating to the circumstance were added. Under the reign of Napoleon, the church of Saint-Geneviève was given back to the Catholic worship. But the ashes of Voltaire remained in the vault where they had been deposited, as well as those of J. J. Rousseau, which had been brought thither on the 20th of Vendémiaire, year III. of the Republic (October 11th, 1794).

Under the Restoration, the name of Pantheon had been taken from the monumental building. Under the title of Church of Saint-Geneviève was remitted, in 1821, to missionaries who occasionally preached there. Every thing was to be feared from their fanaticism. The administration had the precaution to secure the sarcophagi of Voltaire and Rousseau, which were placed in vaults situated under the grand porch outside of the edifice. These vaults, forming a kind of cemetery over which the clergy could claim no authority, were closed with much precaution, and the keys to them re-

which his nephew was abbot. The bishop of the diocese (Troyes), hearing of the abbé's intention, dispatched a positive prohibition; but it arrived the day after the ceremony had taken place.

The notion which some have taken, that Voltaire was ignorant of or at least imperfectly acquainted with the English language, and into which an accomplished though somewhat prejudiced critic has among others been betrayed, is purely fanciful: he had as thorough a knowledge of it as could be acquired by a foreigner; perhaps a greater familiarity and easier

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mained in the hands of M. Hély d'Oissel, then director of Public Works. In 1827, M. Hericart de Thury thought proper to have a double inclosure built, after having inspected the vaults, which he found in a satisfactory state.

In 1830, the two sarcophagi were put back again in the vault from which they had been taken in 1821.

But all the remains of Voltaire are not in the Pantheon. His heart, which was to remain at Ferney, and did remain there as long as the Marquis de Villette held that estate, was in Paris in 1791, and was afterwards transferred to the Château de Villette (near Pont-Saint-Maxence), where it now is [1834].

M. Mitouart, a Parisian apothecary, charged with embalming the body of Voltaire, had permission from the family to keep the cerebellum, and preserved it in spirits of wine. M. Mitouart *fils*, thinking that this should rather be in some public establishment than in the hands of a private person, offered to the Government to deposit it in the Museum of Natural History. This was at the time of the Directory, and while François de Neufchâteau was Minister of the Interior. A letter from this minister, inserted in the *Moniteur* of 17th Germinal, year VII. (March 6th, 1799), accepted the offer of M. Mitouart, and spoke of placing the cerebellum of Voltaire in the Bibliothèque nationale, *au milieu des productions du génie qui les anima*, that is, in a *salle* that contained his Works. Nothing came of it. The *cervelet* remained in the hands of M. Mitouart, *pharmacien de la Maison de Santé, rue du faubourg Saint-Denis, à Paris.*

We learn from a letter of M. Bouillerot, that when Voltaire was exhumed in 1791, a calcaneum (heel-bone) was detached and carried away by a curious person. This calcaneum was preserved in the cabinet of Natural History belonging to M. Mandonnet, a proprietor at Chicherei, near Troyes, and it was the subject of a piece of verses by M. Bernhard, printed in the Mémoires de la Société académique du Départment de l'Aube.

At the same exhumation two teeth were carried off. One of them was a long time preserved by M. Charron, a municipal officer of the Commune of Paris, and especial commissary for the removal of Voltaire's body. The other tooth was given to Antoine François Lemaire, who was afterwards

use of it than any other ever had. He wrote it with ease, and with perfect correctness, in the earlier part of his life, hardly making any mistakes—certainly none which a little care would not have prevented. I have lately seen a letter of his, thanking an author for the present of his book, probably Sir H. Sloane; and there is but one word, *lectors* for *readers*, wrong; nor is there the very least restraint in the style, which is also quite idiomatic, as when he speaks of his "crazy constitution." *Ills* for *maux*, meaning complaints, has the authority of Shakspeare, if indeed any authority were required to justify this use of the word. The Gallicism or mistake of *lectors* proves that he himself wrote this letter, and sent it without any one revising it. While visiting England, in 1727, he published an essay on the "Civil Wars of France," with remarks on the "Epic Poetry of all Ages,"—a small octavo, or large duodecimo volume, intended to illustrate the "Henriade," of which, as has been observed, an edition was published at that time by subscription. The English is perfectly correct, and the diction quite easy and natural. There is a copy in the British Museum, with these words on the title-page, in his own hand—"To Sir Hanslone (Hans Sloane), from his obedient servant, Voltaire." In his latter years he spoke English with great difficulty, and seldom attempted it; but that he retained his familiarity with the language, and could easily write it, we have the clearest evidence in two excellent lines which he wrote when in his eightieth year to Dr. Cradock, who had sent him a copy of his drama, "Zobeide," chiefly borrowed from Voltaire's "Scythes:"

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editor of a journal called *Le Citoyen Français*, and died insane at the Bicêtre. Lemaire carried the relic in a medallion, on which was inscribed the following distich:

Les prêtres ont causé tant de mal à la terre,
Que je garde contre eux une dent de Voltaire.

At the death of Lemaire, the tooth passed to one of his cousins, a Parisian dentist, of the same name. (Note, *ad locum*, to the *Vie de Voltaire*.)

Our history of these relics does not come down to the present moment. Any worshipper of such relics, whether of the ecclesiastical or philosophical kind, can doubtless, with a little trouble, trace them to their actual possessors.—*Ed.*

"Thanks to your muse, a foreign copper shines,
Turn'd into gold, and coin'd in sterling lines."

Nor is our admiration of this facility of English diction lessened by the consideration that the idea is in some degree imitated from Roscommon. H. Walpole has indeed with a gross exaggeration said respecting his letter to Lord Lyttelton, that not one word of it is tolerable English; but he may late in life have lost the facility of writing in a language not acquired while a child, as we know that both with Lord Loughborough and Lord Erskine the Scottish accent returned in old age, though they had got entirely rid of it during the middle period of life.

After the details of his life, and the full consideration of his various works, it would be a very superfluous task to attempt summing up the character of Voltaire, either as regards his intellectual or his moral qualities. The judgment to be pronounced on these must depend upon the details of fact and the particular opinions already given, and no general reflections could alter the impression which these must already have produced.

One part only of his composition has had no place, and derived no illustration from the preceding pages—his convivial qualities, or colloquial powers. These are on all hands represented as having been admirable. He was of a humor peculiarly gay and lively; he had no impatience of temper in society; his irritability was reserved for the closet, and his gall flowed only through the pen. Then his vast information on all subjects, and his ready wit, never failing, but never tiring, added to his having none of the fastidious taste which prevents many great men from enjoying the humors of society themselves, while it casts a damp and a shade over the cheerful hours of others—all must have conspired to render his company a treat of the highest order. His odd and unexpected turns gave his wit a zest that probably never belonged to any other man's. His writings give us some taste of this; and there are anecdotes on record, or at least preserved by tradition, of jokes of which they who read his works at once recognize him as the

author. When the Dijon academicians presented him with the place of an honorary member, observing that their academy was a daughter of the Parisian body—"Eh! oui:" said he, "eh! et une bonne fille, je vous en réponds, qui ne fera jamais parler d'elle."—When at some family party the guests were passing the evening in telling stories of robbers, and it came to his turn—"Once upon a time (he began)—Jadis, il y avoit, un fermier-général——ma foi, Messieurs, j'ai oublié le reste."

When St. Ange, who plumed himself on the refined delicacy of his flattery, said, on arriving at Ferney, "To-day I have seen Homer; to-morrow I shall see Sophocles and Euripides, then Tacitus, then Livy:" "Ah! Monsieur," said his ancient host, alarmed at the outline of a long visit, which he seemed fated to see filled up, "Ah, Monsieur! je suis horriblement vieux. Ne pourriez vous pas tâcher les voir tous le même jour?" The sketch probably was left unfinished by this interruption. So when an English traveller who had been to see Haller, heard Voltaire speak loudly in his praise, and expressed admiration of this candor, saying Haller spoke not so well of him: "Hélas!" was the admirable answer, "il se peut bien que nous nous trompons, tous les deux." A graver rebuke was administered by him to an old lady who expressed her horror at finding herself under the same roof with a declared enemy of the Supreme Being, as she was pleased to term Voltaire: "Sachez, madame, que j'ai dit plus de bien de Dieu dans un seul de mes vers que vous n'en penserez de votre être."

A striking picture of his powers of conversation is given by Goldsmith, who passed an evening in his company about the year 1754. He describes it, after saying generally that no man whom he had ever seen exceeded him; and Goldsmith had lived with the most famous wits of the world, especially of his own country—with Burke, Windham, Johnson, Beauclerk, Fox. There arose a dispute in the party upon the English taste and literature. Diderot was the first to join battle with Fontenelle, who defeated him easily, the knowledge of the former being very limited on the subject of the controversy.

"Voltaire," says Goldsmith,[1] "remained silent and passive for a long while, as if he wished to bear no part in the argument which was going on. At last, about midnight, he began, and spoke for nearly three hours, but in a manner not to be forgotten—his whole frame was animated—what eloquence, mixed with spirit—the finest strokes of raillery—the greatest elegance of language—the utmost sensibility of manner! Never was I so much charmed, nor ever was so absolute a victory as he gained."[2]

To enter further on any general description, when all the particulars have been gone over, would be absurd. It is, however, fit to remark that the odium which has cast a shadow on a name that must otherwise have shone forth with pure and surpassing lustre, is partly at least owing to the little care taken to conceal his unpopular opinions, which is no sufficient ground of blame. But in part, it is owing to that which is exceedingly blamable, the unsparing bitterness of his invective on all the honest prejudices (as even he must have deemed them) of believers, and the unceasing ribaldry of his attacks on those opinions, which whether he thought them true or not, had at any rate the sanction of ages, the support of established institutions, and the cordial assent of the vast majority of mankind. The last twenty years of his life were devoted to a constant warfare with these sentiments. Had he confined himself to discussion, had he only brought the resources of his universal learning and acute reasoning to bear upon the religious belief of his contemporaries, no one would have had a right to complain, and no rational Christian would ever have complained, if the twenty volumes which he thus wrote had been multiplied twenty-fold, or even so as "that all the world could not contain the books which should have been written." But there is a perpetual appeal from the calm reason of the reflecting few to the laugh of the thoughtless many; a substitution

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[1] Prior's edition of O. Goldsmith's Works, iii. 223.

[2] A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine (July, 1846, p. 27), has shown that Goldsmith drew on his fertile imagination for this picture.—*Ed.*

often, generally an addition, of sneer, and gibe, and coarse ridicule, to argumentation; a determination to cry down and laugh down the dogmas which, with his learning and his reason, he was also assaulting in lawful combat. And the consequence has been, that although nothing can be more inaccurate than the notion that he never argues, never produces any proofs which make their appeal to the understanding, yet he passes with the bulk of mankind for a profane scoffer, and little more. The belief of D'Alembert was exactly the same with his own; he has left abundance of letters which show that he had as much zeal against religion as his master, and entered with as much delight into all his endless ribaldry at the expense of the faith and the faithful;[1] but because he never publicly joined in the assault, we find even those who most thoroughly knew his opinions, nay, bishops themselves, concurring in the chant of his praises, as the most inoffensive, and even moral of men; while Voltaire, who never said worse than D'Alembert freely but privately wrote, raises in their minds the idea of an emanation from the father of all evil. It may be hard to define the bounds which should contain the free discussion of sacred subjects. Those who are the most firmly convinced of religious truth are, generally speaking, the most careless to what extent the liberty of assailing it, in examining its grounds, shall be carried; but without attempting to lay down any such rule, we may safely admit that Voltaire offended, and offended grievously, by the manner in which he devoted himself to crying down the sacred things of his coun-

[1] See especially such letters as that in which he speaks of the "Dictionnaire Philosophique," calling it the Dictionnaire de Satan: "Si j'avais des connaissances à l'imprimerie de Belzebuth, je m'empresserai de m'en procurer un exemplaire; car cette lecture m'a fait un plaisir de tous les diables." He says he has swallowed it, "Gloutonnement, en mettant les morceaux en double;" and adds—"Assurément si l'auteur va dans les états de celui qui a fait imprimer cet ouvrage infernal, il sera au moins son premier ministre: personne ne lui a rendu des services plus importans." (*Cor. d'Al.*, 274.) The flippancy of this work, which threw D'Alembert into such raptures, is nearly equal to its great learning and ability. Thus, vol. vi. p. 274: "Bon jour, mon ami Job! tu es un des plus grands originaux," etc., etc.

try, whether we regard the interests of society at large, or the interests of the particular system which he desired to establish.

But though it would be exceedingly wrong to pass over this great and prevailing fault without severe reprobation, it would be equally unjust, nay, ungrateful, ever to forget the immense obligations under which Voltaire has laid mankind by his writings, the pleasure derived from his fancy and his wit, the amusement which his singular and original humor bestows, even the copious instruction with which his historical works are pregnant, and the vast improvement in the manner of writing history which we owe to him. Yet great as these services are—among the greatest that can be rendered by a man of letters—they are really of far inferior value to the benefits which have resulted from his long and arduous struggle against oppression, especially against tyranny in the worst form which it can assume, the persecution of opinion, the infraction of the sacred right to exercise the reason upon all subjects, unfettered by prejudice, uncontrolled by authority, whether of great names or of temporal power. That he combated many important truths which he found enveloped in a cloud of errors, and could not patiently sift, so as to separate the right from the wrong, is undeniably true; that he carried on his conflict, whether with error or with truth, in an offensive manner, and by the use of unlawful weapons, has been freely admitted. But we owe to him the habit of scrutinizing, both in sacred matters and in profane, the merits of whatever is presented for our belief, of examining boldly the foundations of received opinions, of making probability a part of the consideration in all that is related, of calling in plain reason and common sense to assist in our councils when grave matters are under discussion; nor can any one since the days of Luther be named, to whom the spirit of free inquiry, nay, the emancipation of the human mind from spiritual tyranny, owes a more lasting debt of gratitude. No one beyond the pale of the Romish Church ever denies his obligation to the great Reformer, whom he thanks and all but reveres for having broken the chains of her spiritual thraldom. All his coarseness, all his low ribaldry, all that

makes the reading of his works in many places disgusting, in not a few offensive to common decency,[1] and even to the decorum proper to the handling of pious topics, all his assaults upon things which should have been sacred from rude touch, as well as his adherence with unrestrained zeal to some of the most erroneous tenets of the Romish faith—all are forgiven, nay, forgotten, in contemplating the man of whom we can say, "He broke our chains." Unhappily the bad parts of Voltaire's writings are not only placed as it were in a setting by the graces of his style, so that we unwillingly cast them aside, but embalmed for conservation in the spirit of his immortal wit. But if ever the time shall arrive when men, intent solely on graver matters, and bending their whole minds to things of solid importance, shall be careless of such light accomplishments, and the writings which now have so great a relish, more or less openly tasted, shall pass into oblivion, then the impression which this great genius has left will remain; and while his failings are forgotten, and the influence of his faults corrected, the world, wiser and better because he lived, will continue still to celebrate his name.[2]

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[1] See particularly his abominable sermon at Wittenberg, on marriage, actually preached, and of so immoral a tendency, as well as couched in such indelicate language, that it can only be referred to without translation, by Bishop Bossuet and others; also his "Table-talk," in those parts where he treats of women, and describes with ribaldry the most filthy his conflicts against the devil. Nothing in Rabelais is more coarse. Indeed these are passages unexampled in any printed book; but the original sermon must be consulted, for no translator would soil his page with them, and accordingly Audin and others give them only by allusion and circumlocution. "Titzen-Rede," pp. 306 and 464, must itself be resorted to if we would see how the great Reformer wrote and spoke. His allowing the Landgrave of Hesse to marry a second wife while the first was living, and the grounds of the permission, are well known; and the attempt to deny this passage of his life is an entire failure.(*a*)

[2] The edition of Voltaire referred to in this "Life" is that of Baudouin, at Paris, 1828, in 75 volumes.

(*a*) If any one supposes that Lord Brougham is here unjust, let him consult Sir Wm. Hamilton's *Discussions*, p. 506, et sequens.—*Ed.*

VOLTAIRE AND FREDERICK THE GREAT.

BY MACAULAY.

POTSDAM was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina. At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited the happy adventurer. Every new-comer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long succession of favorites, who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early, and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonored old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bunk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and a skewer for a shirt-pin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederick's court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants. Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved.

But the constitution of his mind resembled the constitution of those bodies in which the slightest scratch of a bramble, or the bite of a gnat, never fails to fester. Though his reputation was rather raised than lowered by the abuse of such writers as Fréron and Des Fontaines—though the vengeance which he took on Fréron and Des Fontaines was such, that scourging, branding, pillorying, would have been a trifle to it—there is reason to believe that they gave him far more pain than he ever gave them. Though he enjoyed during his own lifetime the reputation of a classic—though he was extolled by his contemporaries above all poets, philosophers, and historians—though his works were read with as much delight and admiration at Moscow and Westminster, at Florence and Stockholm, as at Paris itself, he was yet tormented by that restless jealousy which should seem to belong only to minds burning with the desire of fame, and yet conscious of impotence. To men of letters who could by no possibility be his rivals, he was, if they behaved well to him, not merely just, not merely courteous, but often a hearty friend and a munificent benefactor. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slyly depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly, and with violent outrage, made war on Jean Jacques. Nor had he the art of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good-humor or of contempt. With all his great talents, and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child or an hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified, he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words—his stamping and cursing—his grimaces and his tears of rage—were a rich feast to those abject natures whose delight is in the agonies of powerful spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one walk, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the great men whose dust made the holy precinct of Port-Royal holier, no

tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, and of *Merope*. At length a rival was announced. Old Crébillon, who, many years before, had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters, and of a capricious populace. A thing called *Catiline*, which he had written in his retirement, was acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece it is sufficient to say, that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudery, between Catiline, whose confidant is the Prætor Lentulus, and Tullia, the daughter of Cicero. The theatre resounded with acclamations. The king pensioned the successful poet; and the coffee-houses pronounced that Voltaire was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, the celestial fire which glowed in Corneille and Racine, was to be found in Crébillon alone.

The blow went to Voltaire's heart. Had his wisdom and fortitude been in proportion to the fertility of his intellect, and to the brilliancy of his wit, he would have seen that it was out of the power of all the puffers and detractors in Europe to put *Catiline* above *Zaire;* but he had none of the magnanimous patience with which Milton and Bentley left their claims to the unerring judgment of time. He eagerly engaged in an undignified competition with Crébillon, and produced a series of plays on the same subjects which his rival had treated. These pieces were coolly received. Angry with the court, angry with the capital, Voltaire began to find pleasure in the prospect of exile. His attachment for Madame de Châtelet long prevented him from executing his purpose. Her death set him at liberty; and he determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters, couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederick seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honorable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof, were offered in return

for the pleasure and honor which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order to enable him to bring his nièce, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal king. The answer was a dry refusal. "I did not," said his majesty, "solicit the honor of the lady's society." On this, Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. "Was there ever such avarice? He has a hundred of tubs full of dollars in his vaults, and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis." It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off; but Frederick, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard d'Arnaud. His majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt, danced about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connection which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, he returned, bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris, that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description—that the king was the most amiable of men—that Potsdam was the Paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received, together

with his gold key, the cross of an order, and a patent insuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia. Frederick, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meager hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title, derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus:—Frederick, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amid the delights of the honeymoon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival, he could not help telling his niece, that the amiable king had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand while patting and stroking with the other. Soon came hints not the less alarming because mysterious. "The supper parties are delicious. The king is the life of the company. But—I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But—but—Berlin is fine, the princess charming, the maids of honor handsome. But"——

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederick was frugal, almost niggardly. When he had secured his plaything, he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of impudence and knavery; and conceived that the favorite of a monarch, who had barrels full of gold and silver laid up in cellars, ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry, and a war began in which Frederick stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire

to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate, that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact, that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax-candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extraordinary associates. The sarcasms soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Métrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederick; that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unassailable by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the archangel:

> "I forewarn thee, shun
> His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
> To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
> Though temper'd heavenly; for that fatal dint,
> Save Him who reigns above, none can resist."

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem—how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain—how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose

of destroying the last solace of earthly misery, and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration—the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. . . . . .

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money, and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stockjobbing, became implicated in transactions of at least a dubious character. The king was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war with the other men of letters who surrounded the king; and this irritated Frederick, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame; for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederick, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned, with remarks and corrections. "See," exclaimed Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the king has sent me to wash!" Talebearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear; and Frederick was as much incensed as a Grub-street writer who had found his name in the "Dunciad."

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, produced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederick's good-will as any

man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin; and stood second to Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at the Prussian court. Frederick had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vainglorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark, a mark never to be effaced, on the forehead of Maupertuis; and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous diatribe of *Doctor Akakia*. He showed this little piece to Frederick, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the centre of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederick was diverted by this charming pasquinade, he was unwilling that it should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the Chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron, be in some degree compromised? The king, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress his performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The diatribe was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The king stormed. Voltaire, with his usual disregard of truth, protested his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The king was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the king his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable, and Voltaire took his leave of Frederick forever. They parted with cold civility, but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the king's poetry, and

forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not, we are confident, for the half of Frederick's kingdom, have consented to father Frederick's verses. The king, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favorite compositions were in the hands of an enemy, as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He conceived himself secure from the power of his late master, when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had, no doubt, been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent jailers. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not to be attributed to the king. Was anybody punished for it? Was anybody called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederick's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge—charging them at the same time to take their measures in such a way that his name might not be compromised? He acted thus towards Count Buhl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French government had taken offence at his jour-

ney to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Leman. There, loosed from every tie which had hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly, was eminently true of this its great forerunner. He could not build—he could only pull down—he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name—not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods—of things noble and things base—of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature, the pleasure of vindicating innocence which had no other helper—of repairing cruel wrongs—of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing terrified Capuchins call him the Antichrist. But whether employed in works of benevolence, or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand. . . . . .

Frederick had some time before made advances towards a reconciliation with Voltaire, and some civil letters had passed between them. After the battle of Kolin their epistolary intercourse became, at least in seeming, friendly and confidential. We do not know any collection of letters which throw so much light on the darkest and most intricate parts of human nature as the correspondence of these strange beings after they had exchanged forgiveness. Both felt that the quarrel had low-

ered them in the public estimation. They admired each other. They stood in need of each other. The great king wished to be handed down to posterity by the great writer. The great writer felt himself exalted by the homage of the great king. Yet the wounds which they had inflicted on each other were too deep to be effaced, or even perfectly healed. Not only did the scars remain; the sore places often festered and bled afresh.

The letters consisted for the most part of compliments, thanks, offers of service, assurances of attachment. But if any thing brought back to Frederick's recollection the cunning and mischievous pranks by which Voltaire had provoked him, some expression of contempt and displeasure broke forth in the midst of his eulogy. It was much worse when any thing recalled to the mind of Voltaire the outrages which he and his kinswoman had suffered at Frankfort. All at once his flowing panegyric is turned into invective. "Remember how you behaved to me. For your sake I have lost the favor of my king. For your sake I am an exile from my country. I loved you. I trusted myself to you. I had no wish but to end my life in your service. And what was my reward? Stripped of all you had bestowed on me, the key, the order, the pension, I was forced to fly from your territories. I was hunted as if I had been a deserter from your grenadiers. I was arrested, insulted, plundered. My niece was dragged in the mud of Frankfort by your soldiers as if she had been some wretched follower of your camp. You have great talents. You have good qualities. But you have one odious vice. You delight in the abasement of your fellow-creatures. You have brought disgrace on the name of philosopher. You have given some color to the slanders of the bigots who say that no confidence can be placed in the justice or humanity of those who reject the Christian faith." Then the king answers with less heat, but with equal severity: "You know that you behaved shamefully in Prussia. It is well for you that you had to deal with a man so indulgent to the infirmities of genius as I am. You richly deserved to see the inside of a

dungeon. Your talents are not more widely known than your faithlessness and your malevolence. The grave itself is no asylum from your spite. Maupertuis is dead; but you still go on calumniating and deriding him, as if you had not made him miserable enough while he was living. Let us have no more of this. And, above all, let me hear no more of your niece. I am sick to death of her name. I can bear with your faults for the sake of your merits; but she has not written *Mahomet* or *Merope*."

An explosion of this kind, it might be supposed, would necessarily put an end to all amicable communication. But it was not so. After every outbreak of ill-humor this extraordinary pair became more loving than before, and exchanged compliments and assurances of mutual regard with a wonderful air of sincerity.

It may well be supposed that men who wrote thus to each other were not very guarded in what they said of each other. The English ambassador, Mitchell, who knew that the King of Prussia was constantly writing to Voltaire with the greatest freedom on the most important subjects, was amazed to hear his Majesty designate this highly-favored correspondent as a bad-hearted fellow, the greatest rascal on the face of the earth. And the language which the poet held about the king was not much more respectful.

It would probably have puzzled Voltaire himself to say what was his real feeling towards Frederick. It was compounded of all sentiments, from enmity to friendship, and from scorn to admiration; and the proportions in which these elements were mixed changed every moment. The old patriarch resembled the spoilt child who screams, stamps, cuffs, laughs, kisses, and cuddles within one quarter of an hour. His resentment was not extinguished; yet he was not without sympathy for his old friend. As a Frenchman, he wished success to the arms of his country. As a philosopher, he was anxious for the stability of a throne on which a philosopher sat. He longed both to save and to humble Frederick. There was one way, and only one, in which all his conflicting feelings

could at once be gratified. If Frederick were preserved by the interference of France, if it were known that for that interference he was indebted to the mediation of Voltaire, this would indeed be delicious revenge; this would indeed be to heap coals of fire on that haughty head. Nor did the vain and restless poet think it impossible that he might, from his hermitage near the Alps, dictate peace to Europe.

VOLTAIRE AND THE CHURCH,

BY MACAULAY.

About a hundred years after the final settlement of the boundary line between Protestantism and Catholicism, began to appear the signs of the fourth great peril of the Church of Rome. The storm which was now rising against her was of a very different kind from those which had preceded it. Those who had formerly attacked her, had questioned only a part of her doctrines. A school was now growing up which rejected the whole. The Albigenses, the Lollards, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, had a positive religious system, and were strongly attached to it. The creed of the new sectaries was altogether negative. They took one of their premises from the Catholics, and one from the Protestants. From the former they borrowed the principle, that Catholicism was the only pure and genuine Christianity. With the latter, they held that some parts of the Catholic system were contrary to reason. The conclusion was obvious. Two propositions, each of which, separately, is compatible with the most exalted piety, formed, when held in conjunction, the groundwork of a system of irreligion. The doctrine of Bossuet, that transubstantiation is affirmed in the Gospel, and the doctrine of Tillotson, that transubstantiation is an absurdity, when put together, produced by logical necessity the inferences of Voltaire.

Had the sect which was rising at Paris been a sect of mere scoffers, it is very improbable that it would have left deep traces of its existence in the institutions and manners of

Europe. Mere negation—mere epicurean infidelity, as Lord Bacon most justly observes—has never disturbed the peace of the world. It furnishes no motive for action. It inspires no enthusiasm. It has no missionaries, no crusaders, no martyrs. If the patriarch of the Holy Philosophical Church had contented himself with making jokes about Saul's asses and David's wives, and with criticising the poetry of Ezekiel in the same narrow spirit in which he criticised that of Shakspeare, the Church would have had little to fear. But it is due to him, and to his compeers, to say, that the real secret of their strength lay in the truth which was mingled with their errors, and in the generous enthusiasm which was hidden under their flippancy. They were men who, with all their faults, moral and intellectual, sincerely and earnestly desired the improvement of the condition of the human race—whose blood boiled at the sight of cruelty and injustice—who made manful war, with every faculty which they possessed, on what they considered as abuses—and who, on many signal occasions, placed themselves gallantly between the powerful and the oppressed. While they assailed Christianity with a rancor and an unfairness disgraceful to men who call themselves philosophers, they yet had, in far greater measure than their opponents, that charity towards men of all classes and races which Christianity enjoins. Religious persecution, judicial torture, arbitrary imprisonment, the unnecessary multiplication of capital punishments, the delay and chicanery of tribunals, the exactions of farmers of the revenue, slavery, the slave-trade, were the constant subjects of their lively satire and eloquent disquisitions. When an innocent man was broken on the wheel at Toulouse—when a youth, guilty only of an indiscretion, was burned at Abbeville—when a brave officer, borne down by public injustice, was dragged, with a gag in his mouth, to die on the Place de Grêve, a voice instantly went forth from the banks of Lake Leman, which made itself heard from Moscow to Cadiz, and which sentenced the unjust judges to the contempt and detestation of all Europe. The really efficient weapons with which the philosophers assailed the evangelical faith were

borrowed from the evangelical morality. The ethical and dogmatical parts of the Gospel were unhappily turned against each other. On the one side was a Church boasting of the purity of a doctrine derived from the apostles; but disgraced by the massacre of St. Bartholomew, by the murder of the best of kings, by the war of the Cevennes, by the destruction of Port-Royal. On the other side was a sect laughing at the Scriptures, shooting out the tongue at the sacraments, but ready to encounter principalities and powers in the cause of justice, mercy, and toleration. Irreligion, accidentally associated with philanthropy, triumphed for a time over religion accidentally associated with political and social abuses. Every thing gave way to the zeal and activity of the new reformers. In France, every man distinguished in letters was found in their ranks. Every year gave birth to works in which the fundamental principles of the Church were attacked with argument, invective, and ridicule. The Church made no defence, except by acts of power. Censures were pronounced—editions were seized—insults were offered to the remains of infidel writers; but no Bossuet, no Pascal, came forth to encounter Voltaire. There appeared not a single defence of the Catholic doctrine which produced any considerable effect, or which is now even remembered. A bloody and unsparing persecution, like that which put down the Albigenses, might have put down the philosophers. But the time for the De Montforts and Dominics had gone by. The punishments which the priests were still able to inflict were sufficient to irritate, but not sufficient to destroy. The war was between power on the one side, and wit on the other, and the power was under far more restraint than the wit. Orthodoxy soon became a badge of ignorance and stupidity. It was as necessary to the character of an accomplished man that he should despise the religion of his country, as that he should know his letters. The new doctrines spread rapidly through Christendom. Paris was the capital of the whole continent. French was everywhere the language of polite circles. The literary glory of Italy and Spain had departed. That of Germany had not yet dawned.

The teachers of France were the teachers of Europe. The Parisian opinions spread fast among the educated classes beyond the Alps; nor could the vigilance of the Inquisition prevent the contraband importation of the new heresy into Castile and Portugal. Governments—even arbitrary governments—saw with pleasure the progress of this philosophy. Numerous reforms, generally laudable, sometimes hurried on without sufficient regard to time, to place, and to public feeling, showed the extent of its influence. The rulers of Prussia, of Russia, of Austria, and of many smaller States, were supposed to be among the initiated.

The Church of Rome was still, in outward show, as stately and splendid as ever, but her foundation was undermined. No State had quitted her communion, or confiscated her revenues; but the reverence of the people was everywhere departing from her.

The first great warning stroke was the fall of that society, which, in the conflict with Protestantism, had saved the Catholic Church from destruction. The Order of Jesus had never recovered from the injury received in the struggle with Port-Royal. It was now still more rudely assailed by the philosophers. Its spirit was broken; its reputation was tainted. Insulted by all the men of genius in Europe, condemned by the civil magistrate, feebly defended by the chiefs of the hierarchy, it fell—and great was the fall of it.

The movement went on with increasing speed. The first generation of the new sect passed away. The doctrines of Voltaire were inherited and exaggerated by successors, who bore to him the same relation which the Anabaptists bore to Luther, or the Fifth-Monarchy men to Pym. At length the Revolution came. Down went the old Church of France, with all its pomp and wealth. Some of its priests purchased a maintenance by separating themselves from Rome, and by becoming the authors of a fresh schism. Some, rejoicing in the new license, flung away their sacred vestments, proclaimed that their whole life had been an imposture, insulted and persecuted the religion of which they had been ministers, and distinguished

themselves even in the Jacobin Club and the Commune of Paris, by the excess of their impudence and ferocity. Others, more faithful to their principles, were butchered by scores without a trial, drowned, shot, or hung on lamp-posts. Thousands fled from their country to take sanctuary under the shade of hostile altars. The churches were closed; the bells were silent; the shrines were plundered; the silver crucifixes were melted down. Buffoons, dressed in copes and surplices, came dancing the *carmagnole* even to the bar of the Convention. The bust of Marat was substituted for the statues of the martyrs of Christianity. A prostitute, seated in state in the chancel of Notre Dame, received the adoration of thousands, who exclaimed, that at length, for the first time, those ancient Gothic arches had resounded with the accents of truth. The new unbelief was as intolerant as the old superstition. To show reverence for religion, was to incur the suspicion of disaffection. It was not without imminent danger that the priest baptized the infant, joined the hands of lovers, or listened to the confession of the dying. The absurd worship of the Goddess of Reason was, indeed, of short duration, but the deism of Robespierre and Lepaux was not less hostile to the Catholic faith than the atheism of Clootz and Chaumette.

Nor were the calamities of the Church confined to France. The revolutionary spirit, attacked by all Europe, beat all Europe back, became conqueror in its turn, and, not satisfied with the Belgian cities and the rich domains of the spiritual electors, went raging over the Rhine and through the passes of the Alps. Throughout the whole of the great war against Protestantism, Italy and Spain had been the base of the Catholic operations. Spain was now the obsequious vassal of the infidels. Italy was subjugated by them. To her ancient principalities succeeded the Cis-alpine republic, and the Ligurian republic, and the Parthenopean republic. The shrine of Loretto was stripped of the treasures piled up by the devotion of six hundred years. The convents of Rome were pillaged. The tricolored flag floated on the top of the castle of St. Angelo. The successor of St. Peter was carried away captive by the un-

believers. He died a prisoner in their hands; and even the honors of sepulture were long witheld from his remains.

It is not strange that, in the year 1799, even sagacious observers should have thought that, at length, the hour of the Church of Rome was come. An infidel power ascendant—the Pope dying in captivity—the most illustrious prelates of France living in a foreign country on Protestant alms—the noblest edifices which the munificence of former ages had consecrated to the worship of God, turned into temples of victory, or into banqueting-houses for political societies, or into theophilanthropic chapels;—such signs might well be supposed to indicate the approaching end of that long domination.

CHARACTER AND GENIUS OF VOLTAIRE,

BY CARLYLE.

To our own view, we confess, on looking at Voltaire's life, the chief quality that shows itself is one for which *adroitness* seems the fitter name. Greatness implies several conditions, the existence of which, in his case, it might be difficult to demonstrate; but of his claim to this other praise there can be no disputing. Whatever be his aims, high or low, just or the contrary, he is at all times, and to the utmost degree, expert in pursuing them. It is to be observed, moreover, that his aims in general were not of a simple sort, and the attainment of them easy: few literary men have had a course so diversified with vicissitudes as Voltaire's. His life was not spent in a corner, like that of a studious recluse, but on the open theatre of the world; in an age full of commotion, when society is rending itself asunder, Superstition already armed for deadly battle against Unbelief; in which battle he himself plays a distinguished part. From his earliest years, we find him in perpetual communication with the higher personages of his time, often with the highest; it is in circles of authority, of reputation, at lowest, of fashion and rank, that he lives and works. Ninon de l'Enclos leaves the boy a legacy to buy books; he is still young, when he can say of his supper companions, "We are all Princes or Poets." In after life, he exhibits himself in company or correspondence with all manner of principalities and powers, from Queen Caroline of England to the Empress Catherine of Russia, from Pope Benedict to Frederick the Great. Meanwhile, shifting from side to side of Europe, hiding in the country, or living sumptuously in capital cities, he quits not

his pen, with which, as with some enchanter's rod, more potent than any king's sceptre, he turns and winds the mighty machine of European Opinion; approves himself, as his schoolmaster had predicted, the *Coryphée du Déisme;* and, not content with this elevation, strives, and nowise ineffectually, to unite with it a poetical, historical, philosophic, and even scientific pre-eminence. Nay, we may add, a pecuniary one; for he speculates in the funds, diligently solicits pensions and promotions, trades to America, is long a regular victualling-contractor for armies; and thus, by one means and another, independently of literature, which would never yield much money, raises his income from 800 francs a year to more than centuple that sum. And now, having, besides all this commercial and economical business, written some thirty quartos, the most popular that were ever written, he returns after long exile to his native city, to be welcomed there almost as a religious idol; and closes a life, prosperous alike in the building of country-seats, and the composition of *Henriades* and *Philosophical Dictionaries*, by the most appropriate demise; by drowning, as it were, in an ocean of applause, so that as he lived for fame, he may be said to have died of it.

Such various, complete success, granted only to a small portion of men in any age of the world, presupposes, at least, with every allowance for good fortune, an almost unrivalled expertness of management. There must have been a great talent of some kind at work here: a cause proportionate to the effect. It is wonderful, truly, to observe with what perfect skill Voltaire steers his course through so many conflicting circumstances: how he weathers this Cape Horn, darts lightly through that Maelstrom; always either sinks his enemy, or shuns him; here waters, and careens, and traffics with the rich savages; there lies land-locked till the hurricane is overblown; and so, in spite of all billows, and sea-monsters, and hostile fleets, finishes his long Manilla voyage, with streamers flying, and deck piled with ingots! To say nothing of his literary character, of which this same dexterous address will also be found to be a main feature, let us glance only at the general aspect of his

conduct, as manifested both in his writings and actions. By turns, and ever at the right season, he is imperious and obsequious; now shoots abroad, from the mountain-tops, Hyperion-like, his keen, innumerable shafts; anon, when danger is advancing, flies to obscure nooks; or, if taken in the fact, swears it was but in sport, and that he is the peaceablest of men. He bends to occasion; can, to a certain extent, blow hot or blow cold; and never attempts force, where cunning will serve his turn. The beagles of the Hierarchy and of the Monarchy, proverbially quick of scent, and sharp of tooth, are out in quest of him; but this is a lion-fox which cannot be captured. By wiles and a thousand doublings, he utterly distracts his pursuers; he can burrow in the earth, and all trace of him is gone. With a strange system of anonymity and publicity, of denial and assertion, of Mystification in all senses, has Voltaire surrounded himself. He can raise no standing armies for his defence, yet he too is a "European power," and not undefended; an invisible, impregnable, though hitherto unrecognized bulwark, that of Public Opinion, defends him. With great art, he maintains this stronghold; though ever and anon sallying out from it, far beyond the permitted limits. But he has his coat of darkness, and his shoes of swiftness, like that other Killer of Giants. We find Voltaire a supple courtier, or a sharp satirist; he can talk blasphemy, and build churches, according to the signs of the times. Frederick the Great is not too high for his diplomacy, nor the poor Printer of his *Zadig* too low; he manages the Cardinal Fleuri, and the Curé of St. Sulpice; and laughs in his sleeve at all the world. We should pronounce him to be one of the best politicians on record; as we have said, the *adroitest* of all literary men.

At the same time, Voltaire's worst enemies, it seems to us, will not deny that he had naturally a keen sense for rectitude, indeed, for all virtue: the utmost vivacity of temperament characterizes him; his quick susceptibility for every form of beauty is moral as well as intellectual. Nor was his practice without indubitable and highly creditable proofs of this. To the help-needing he was at all times a ready benefactor: many

were the hungry adventurers who profited of his bounty, and then bit the hand that had fed them. If we enumerate his generous acts, from the case of the Abbé Desfontaines down to that of the widow Calas, and the Serfs of Saint Claude, we shall find that few private men have had so wide a circle of charity, and have watched over it so well. Should it be objected that love of reputation entered largely into these proceedings, Voltaire can afford a handsome deduction on that head: should the uncharitable even calculate that love of reputation was the sole motive, we can only remind them that love of *such* reputation is itself the effect of a social, humane disposition; and wish, as an immense improvement, that all men were animated with it. Voltaire was not without his experience of human baseness; but he still had a fellow-feeling for human sufferings; and delighted, were it only as an honest luxury, to relieve them. His attachments seem remarkably constant and lasting: even such sots as Thieriot, whom nothing but habit could have endeared to him, he continues, and after repeated injuries, to treat and regard as friends. To his equals we do not observe him envious, at least not palpably and despicably so; though this, we should add, might be in him, who was from the first so paramountly popular, no such hard attainment. Against Montesquieu, perhaps against him alone, he cannot help entertaining a small secret grudge; yet ever in public he does him the amplest justice: *l'Arlequin Grotius* of the fireside becomes, on all grave occasions, the author of the *Esprit des Loix.* Neither to his enemies, and even betrayers, is Voltaire implacable or meanly vindictive: the instant of their submission is also the instant of his forgiveness; their hostility itself provokes only casual sallies from him; his heart is too kindly, indeed too light, to cherish any rancor, any continuation of revenge. If he has not the virtue to forgive, he is seldom without the prudence to forget; if, in his lifelong contentions, he cannot treat his opponents with any magnanimity, he seldom, or perhaps never once, treats them quite basely; seldom or never with that absolute unfairness which the law of retaliation might so often have seemed to justify.

We would say that, if not heroic, he is at all times a perfectly civilized man; which considering that his war was with exasperated theologians, and a "war to the knife," on their part, may be looked upon as rather a surprising circumstance. He exhibits many minor virtues, a due appreciation of the highest; and fewer faults than, in his situation, might have been expected, and perhaps pardoned.

All this is well, and may fit out a highly expert and much esteemed man of business, in the widest sense of that term; but is still far from constituting a "great character." In fact, there is one deficiency in Voltaire's original structure, which, it appears to us, must be quite fatal to such claims for him; we mean his inborn levity of nature, his entire want of Earnestness. Voltaire was by birth a Mocker, and light *Pococurante;* which natural disposition his way of life confirmed into a predominant, indeed all-pervading habit. Far be it from us to say, that solemnity is an essential of greatness; that no great man can have other than a rigid vinegar aspect of countenance, never to be thawed or warmed by billows of mirth! There are things in this world to be laughed at, as well as things to be admired; and his is no complete mind, that cannot give to each sort its due. Nevertheless, contempt is a dangerous element to sport in; a deadly one, if we habitually live in it. How, indeed, to take the lowest view of this matter, shall a man accomplish great enterprises,—enduring all toil, resisting temptations, laying aside every weight,—unless he zealously love what he pursues? The faculty of love, of admiration, is to be regarded as the sign and the measure of high souls: unwisely directed, it leads to many evils; but without it, there cannot be any good Ridicule, on the other hand, is indeed a faculty much prized by its possessors; yet, intrinsically, it is a small faculty; we may say, the smallest of all faculties that other men are at the pains to repay with any esteem. It is directly opposed to Thought, to Knowledge, properly so called; its nourishment and essence is Denial, which hovers only on the surface, while Knowledge dwells far below. Moreover, it is by nature selfish and morally trivial; it cherishes nothing but our Vanity, which

may in general be left safely enough to shift for itself. Little "discourse of reason," in any sense, is implied in Ridicule: a scoffing man is in no lofty mood, for the time; shows more of the imp than of the angel. This too when his scoffing is what we call just, and has some foundation on truth; while again the laughter of fools, that vain sound, said in Scripture to resemble the "crackling of thorns under the pot,"—which they cannot heat, and only soil and begrime,—must be regarded, in these latter times, as a very serious addition to the sum of human wretchedness; and may not always, when considering the increase of crime in the Metropolis, escape the vigilance of Parliament.

We have, oftener than once, endeavored to attach some meaning to that aphorism, vulgarly imputed to Shaftesbury, which, however, we can find nowhere in his works, that *ridicule is the test of truth.* But of all chimeras, that ever advanced themselves in the shape of philosophical doctrines, this is to us the most formless and purely inconceivable. Did or could the unassisted human faculties ever understand it, much more believe it? Surely, so far as the common mind can discern, laughter seems to depend not less on the laugher than on the laughee; and who gave laughers a patent to be always just, and always omniscient? If the philosophers of Nootka Sound were pleased to laugh at the manœuvres of Cook's seamen, did that render these manœuvres useless, and were the seamen to stand idle, or take to leather canoes, till the laughter abated? Let a discerning public judge.

But, leaving these questions for the present, we may observe at least that all great men have been careful to subordinate this talent or habit of ridicule; nay, in the ages which we consider the greatest, most of the arts that contribute to it have been thought disgraceful for freemen, and confined to the exercise of slaves. With Voltaire, however, there is no such subordination visible: by nature, or by practice, mockery has grown to be the irresistible bias of his disposition; so that for him, in all matters, the first question is, not what is true, but what is false; not what is to be loved, and held fast, and ear-

nestly laid to heart, but what is to be contemned, and derided, and sportfully cast out of doors. Here truly he earns abundant triumph as an image-breaker, but pockets little real wealth. Vanity, with its adjuncts, as we have said, finds rich solacement; but for aught better, there is not much. Reverence, the highest feeling that man's nature is capable of, the crown of his whole moral manhood, and precious, like fine gold, were it in the rudest forms, he seems not to understand, or have heard of, even by credible tradition. The glory of knowing and believing is all but a stranger to him; only with that of questioning and qualifying is he familiar. Accordingly, he sees but a little way into Nature: the mighty All, in its beauty, and infinite mysterious grandeur, humbling the small *Me* into nothingness, has never even for moments been revealed to him: only this and that other atom of it, and the differences and discrepancies of these two, has he looked into, and noted down. His theory of the world, his picture of man and man's life, is little; for a Poet and Philosopher, even pitiful. Examine it, in its highest developments, you find it an altogether vulgar picture; simply a reflex, from more or fewer mirrors of Self and the poor interests of Self. "The Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance," was never more invisible to any man. He reads History not with the eye of a devout Seer, or even of a Critic; but through a pair of mere anti-catholic spectacles. It is not a mighty drama, enacted on the theatre of Infinitude, with Suns for lamps, and Eternity as a background; whose author is God, and whose purport and thousand-fold moral lead us up to the "dark with excess of light" of the Throne of God; but a poor wearisome debating-club dispute, spun through ten centuries, between the *Enclycopèdie* and the *Sorbonne*. Wisdom or folly, nobleness or baseness, are merely superstitious or unbelieving: God's Universe is a larger Patrimony of St. Peter, from which it were well and pleasant to hunt the Pope.

In this way, Voltaire's nature, which was originally vehement rather than deep, came in its maturity, in spite of all his wonderful gifts, to be positively shallow. We find no heroism

of character in him, from first to last; nay, there is not that we know of, one great thought, in all his six-and-thirty quartos. The high worth implanted in him by Nature, and still often manifested in his conduct, does not shine there like a light, but like a coruscation. The enthusiasm proper to such a mind, visits him; but it has no abiding virtue in his thought, no local habitation and no name. There is in him a rapidity, but at the same time a pettiness; a certain violence, and fitful abruptness, which takes from him all dignity. Of his *emportements* and tragi-comical explosions, a thousand anecdotes are on record: neither is he, in these cases, a terrific volcano, but a mere bundle of rockets. He is nigh shooting poor Dorn, the Frankfort constable; actually fires a pistol, into the lobby, at him; and this, three days after that melancholy business of the "*Œuvre de Poésie du Roi mon Maître*" had been finally adjustted. A bookseller, that, with the natural instinct of fallen mankind, overcharges him, receives from this Philosopher, by way of payment at sight, a slap on the face. Poor Longchamp, with considerable tact, and a praiseworthy air of second-table respectability, details various scenes of this kind: how Voltaire dashed away his combs, and maltreated his wig, and otherwise fiercely comported himself the very first morning; how once, having a keenness of appetite, sharpened by walking, and a diet of weak tea, he became uncommonly anxious for supper; and Clairaut and Madame du Chatelet, sunk in algebraic calculations, twice promised to come down, but still kept the dishes cooling; and the Philosopher at last desperately battered, open their locked door with his foot, exclaiming, "*Vous êtes donc de concert pour me faire mourir?*" And yet Voltaire had a true kindness of heart; all his domestics and dependents loved him, and continued with him. He has many elements of goodness, but floating loosely; nothing is combined in steadfast union. It is true, he presents in general a surface of smoothness, of cultured regularity; yet, under it, there is not the silent rock-bound strength of a world, but the wild tumults of a chaos are ever bursting through. He is a wan of power, but not of beneficent authority; we fear but

cannot reverence him; we feel him to be stronger, not higher. Much of this spiritual short-coming and perversion might be due to natural defect: but much of it also is due to the age into which he was cast. It was an age of discord and division; the approach of a grand crisis in human affairs. Already we discern in it all the elements of the French Revolution; and wonder, so easily do we forget how entangled and hidden the meaning of the present generally is to us, that all men did not foresee the comings on of that fearful convulsion. On the one hand, a high all-attempting activity of Intellect: the most peremptory spirit of inquiry abroad on every subject; things human and things divine alike cited without misgivings before the same boastful tribunal of so-called Reason, which means here a merely argumentative Logic; the strong in mind excluded from his regular influence in the State, and deeply conscious of that injury. On the other hand, a privileged few, strong in the subjection of the many, yet in itself weak; a piebald, and for most part altogether decrepit battalion, of Clergy, of purblind Nobility, or rather of Courtiers, for as yet the Nobility is mostly on the other side: these cannot fight with Logic, and the day of persecution is well-nigh done. The whole force of law, indeed, is still in their hands; but the far deeper force, which alone gives efficacy to law, is hourly passing away from them. Hope animates one side; fear the other; and the battle will be fierce and desperate. For there is wit without wisdom on the part of the self-styled philosophers; feebleness with exasperation on the part of their opponents; pride enough on all hands, but little magnanimity; perhaps nowhere any pure love of truth, only everywhere the purest, most ardent love of self. In such a state of things, there lay abundant principles of discord: these two influences hung like fast-gathering electric clouds, as yet on opposite sides of the horizon, but with a malignity of aspect, which boded, whenever they might meet, a sky of fire and blackness, thunderbolts to waste the earth, and the sun and stars, though but for a season, to be blotted out from the heavens. For there is no conducting medium to unite softly these hostile elements; there is no true virtue, no

true wisdom, on the one side or on the other. Never, perhaps, was there an epoch, in the history of the world, when universal corruption called so loudly for reform; and they who undertook that task were men intrinsically so worthless. Not by Gracchi, but by Catilines; not by Luthers, but by Aretines, was Europe to be renovated. The task has been a long and bloody one; and is still far from done.

In this condition of affairs, what side such a man as Voltaire was to take could not be doubtful. Whether he ought to have taken either side; whether he should not rather have stationed himself in the middle; the partisan of neither, perhaps hated by both; acknowledging, and forwarding, and striving to reconcile, what truth was in each; and preaching forth a far deeper truth, which, if his own century had neglected it, had persecuted it, future centuries would have recognized as priceless: all this was another question. Of no man, however gifted, can we require what he has not to give: but Voltaire called himself Philosopher, nay, *the* Philosopher. And such has often, indeed generally, been the fate of great men, and Lovers of Wisdom: their own age and country have treated them as of no account; in the great Corn-Exchange of the world, their pearls have seemed but spoiled barley, and been ignominiously rejected. Weak in adherents, strong only in their faith, in their indestructible consciousness of worth and well-doing, they have silently, or in words, appealed to coming ages, when their own ear would indeed be shut to the voice of love, and of hatred, but the Truth that had dwelt in them would speak with a voice audible to all. Bacon left his works to future generations, when some centuries should have elapsed. "Is it much for me," said Kepler, in his isolation, and extreme need, "that men should accept my discovery? If the Almighty waited six thousand years for one to see what He had made, I may surely wait two hundred, for one to understand what I have seen?" All this, and more, is implied in love of wisdom, in genuine seeking of truth; the noblest function that can be appointed for a man, but requiring also the noblest man to fulfil it.

With Voltaire, however, there is no symptom, perhaps there

was no conception, of such nobleness; the high call for which, indeed, in the existing state of things, his intellect may have had as little the force to discern, as his heart had the force to obey. He follows a simpler course. Heedless of remoter issues, he adopts the cause of his own party; of that class with whom he lived, and was most anxious to stand well; he enlists in their ranks, not without hopes that he may one day rise to be their general. A resolution perfectly accordant with his prior habits, and temper of mind; and from which his whole subsequent procedure, and moral aspect as a man naturally enough evolves itself. Not that we would say, Voltaire was a mere prize-fighter; one of "Heaven's Swiss," contending for a cause which he only half, or not at all approved of. Far from it. Doubtless he loved truth, doubtless he partially felt himself to be advocating truth; nay, we know not that he has ever yet, in a single instance, been convicted of wilfully perverting his belief; of uttering, in all his controversies, one deliberate falsehood. Nor should this negative praise seem an altogether slight one, for greatly were it to be wished that even the best of his better-intentioned opponents had always deserved the like. Nevertheless, his love of truth is not that deep, infinite love, which beseems a Philosopher; which many ages have been fortunate enough to witness; nay, of which his own age had still some examples. It is a far inferior love, we should say, to that of poor Jean Jacques, half-sage, half-maniac as he was; it is more a prudent calculation than a passion. Voltaire loves Truth, but chiefly of the triumphant sort; we have no instance of his fighting for a quite discrowned and outcast Truth; it is chiefly when she walks abroad, in distress, it may be, but still with queen-like insignia, and knighthoods and renown are to be earned in her battles, that he defends her, that he charges gallantly against the Cades and Tylers. Nay, at all times, belief itself seems, with him, to be less the product of Meditation than of Argument. His first question with regard to any doctrine, perhaps his final test of its worth and genuineness, is—Can others be convinced of this? Can I truck it in the market for power? "To such questioners," it has

been said, "Truth, who buys not, and sells not, goes on her way, and makes no answer."

In fact, if we inquire into Voltaire's ruling motive, we shall find that it was at bottom but a vulgar one: ambition, the desire of ruling, by such means as he had, over other men. He acknowledges no higher divinity than Public Opinion; for whatever he asserts or performs, the number of votes is the measure of strength and value. Yet let us be just to him; let us admit that he, in some degree, estimates his votes, as well as counts them. If love of fame, which, especially for such a man, we can only call another modification of Vanity, is always his ruling passion, he has a certain taste in gratifying it. His vanity, which cannot be extinguished, is ever skilfully concealed; even his just claims are never boisterously insisted on; throughout his whole life he shows no single feature of the quack. Nevertheless, even in the height of his glory, he has a strange sensitiveness to the judgment of the world; could he have contrived a Dionysius' Ear, in the Rue Traversière, we should have found him watching at it, night and day. Let but any little evil-disposed Abbé, any Fréron, or Piron,

> *Pauvre Piron, qui ne fut jamais rien,*
> *Pas même Académicien,*

write a libel or epigram on him, what a fluster he is in! We grant he forbore much, in these cases; manfully consumed his own spleen, and sometimes long held his peace: but it was his part to have always done so. Why should such a man ruffle himself with the spite of exceeding small persons? Why not let these poor devils write; why should they not earn a dishonest penny, at his expense, if they had no readier way? But Voltaire cannot part with his "voices," his "most sweet voices;" for they are his gods; take these, and what has he left? Accordingly, in literature and morals, in all his comings and goings, we find him striving, with a religious care, to sail strictly with the wind. In Art, the Parisian *Parterre* is his court of last appeal: he consults the *Café de Procope*, on his wisdom or his folly, as if it were a true Delphic Oracle. . . . .

Voltaire reproachfully says of St. Louis, that "he ought to have been above his age;" but, in his own case, we can find few symptoms of such heroic superiority. The same perpetual appeal to his contemporaries, the same intense regard to reputation, as he viewed it, prescribes for him both his enterprises and his manner of conducting them. His aim is to please the more enlightened, at least the politer part of the world; and he offers them simply what they most wish for, be it in theatrical shows for their pastime, or in skeptical doctrines for their edification. For this latter purpose, Ridicule is the weapon he selects, and it suits him well. This was not the age of deep thoughts; no Duc de Richelieu, no Prince Conti, no Frederick the Great would have listened to such: only sportful contempt, and a thin conversational logic will avail. There may be wool-quilts, which the lath-sword of Harlequin will pierce, when the club of Hercules has rebounded from them in vain. As little was this an age for high virtues; no heroism, in any form, is required, or even acknowledged; but only, in all forms, a certain *bienséance*. To this rule, also, Voltaire readily conforms; indeed, he finds no small advantage in it. For a lax public morality not only allows him the indulgence of many a little private vice, and brings him in this and the other windfall of *menus plaisirs*, but opens him the readiest resource in many enterprises of danger. Of all men, Voltaire has the least disposition to increase the Army of Martyrs. No testimony will he seal with his blood; scarcely any will he so much as sign with ink. His obnoxious doctrines, as we have remarked, he publishes under a thousand concealments; with underplots and wheels within wheels; so that his whole track is in darkness, only his works see the light. No Proteus is so nimble, or assumes so many shapes; if, by rare chance, caught sleeping, he whisks through the smallest hole, and is out of sight, while the noose is getting ready. Let his judges take him to task, he will shuffle and evade; if directly questioned, he will even lie. . . . . .

Such principles and habits, too lightly adopted by Voltaire, acted, as it seems to us, with hostile effect on his moral nature,

not originally of the noblest sort, but which, under other influences, might have attained to far greater nobleness. As it is, we see in him simply a Man of the World, such as Paris and the eighteenth century produced and approved of: a polite, attractive, most cultivated, but essentially self-interested man; not without highly amiable qualities; indeed, with a general disposition which we could have accepted without disappointment in a mere Man of the World, but must find very defective, sometimes altogether out of place, in a Poet and Philosopher. Above this character of a Parisian "honorable man," he seldom or never rises; nay, sometimes we find him hovering on the very lowest boundaries of it, or, perhaps, even fairly below it. We shall nowise accuse him of excessive regard for money, of any wish to shine by the influence of mere wealth: let those commercial speculations, including even the victualling-contracts, pass for laudable prudence, for love of independence, and of the power to do good. But what are we to make of that hunting after pensions, and even after mere titles? There is an assiduity displayed here, which sometimes almost verges towards sneaking. Well might it provoke the scorn of Alfieri; for there is nothing better than the spirit of "a French plebeian," apparent in it. . . . . .

The truth is, we are trying Voltaire by too high a standard; comparing him with an ideal which he himself never strove after, perhaps never seriously aimed at. He is no great Man, but only a great *Persifleur;* a man for whom life, and all that pertains to it, has, at best, but a despicable meaning; who meets its difficulties not with earnest force, but with gay agility; and is found always at the top, less by power in swimming, than by lightness in floating. Take him in this character, forgetting that any other was ever ascribed to him, and we find that he enacted it almost to perfection. Never man better understood the whole secret of *Persiflage;* meaning, thereby, not only the external faculty of polite contempt, but that art of general inward contempt, by which a man of this sort endeavors to subject the circumstances of his Destiny to his Volition, and be, what is the instinctive effort of all men,

though in the midst of material Necessity, morally Free. Voltaire's latent derision is as light, copious, and all-pervading as the derision which he utters. Nor is this so simple an attainment as we might fancy; a certain kind and degree of Stoicism, or approach to Stoicism, is necessary for the completed *Persifleur;* as for moral, or even practical completion, in any other way. The most indifferent-minded man is not by nature indifferent to his own pain and pleasure: this is an indifference, which he must by some method study to acquire, or acquire the show of; and which, it is fair to say, Voltaire manifests in a rather respectable degree. Without murmuring, he has reconciled himself to most things: the human lot, in this lower world, seems a strange business, yet, on the whole, with more of the farce in it, than of the tragedy; to him, it is nowise heart-rending, that this Planet of ours should be sent sailing through Space, like a miserable, aimless Ship-of-Fools, and he himself be a fool among the rest, and only a very little wiser than they. He does not, like Bolingbroke, "patronize Providence," though such sayings, as *Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer*, seem now and then to indicate a tendency of that sort: but, at all events, he never openly levies war against Heaven; well knowing that the time spent in frantic malediction, directed *thither*, might be spent otherwise with more profit. There is, truly, no *Werterism* in him, either in its bad or its good sense. If he sees no unspeakable majesty in heaven and earth, neither does he see any unsufferable horror there. His view of the world is a cool, gently scornful, altogether prosaic one: his sublimest Apocalypse of Nature lies in the microscope and telescope; the Earth is a place for producing corn; the Starry Heavens are admirable as a nautical time-keeper. Yet, like a prudent man, he has adjusted himself to his condition, such as it is: he does not chant any *Miserere* over human life, calculating that no charitable dole, but only laughter, would be the reward of such an enterprise; does not hang or drown himself, clearly understanding that death of itself will soon save him that trouble. Affliction, it is true, has not for him any precious jewel in its head; on the contrary, it is an un-

mixed nuisance; yet, happily, not one to be howled over, so much as one to be speedily removed out of sight: if he does not learn from it Humility, and the sublime lesson of Resignation, neither does it teach him hard-heartedness, and sickly discontent; but he bounds lightly over it, leaving both the jewel and the toad at a safe distance behind him.

Nor was Voltaire's history without perplexities enough to keep this principle in exercise; to try whether in life, as in literature, the *ridiculum* were really better than the *acer*. We must own, that on no occasion does it altogether fail him; never does he seem perfectly at a nonplus; no adventure is so hideous, that he cannot, in the long run, find some means to laugh at it, and forget it. Take, for instance, that last ill-omened visit of his to Frederick the Great. This was, probably, the most mortifying incident in Voltaire's whole life: an open experiment, in the sight of all Europe, to ascertain whether French Philosophy had virtue enough in it to found any friendly union, in such circumstances, even between its great master and his most illustrious disciple; and an experiment which answered in the negative, as was natural enough; for Vanity is of a divisive not of a uniting nature; and between the King of Letters and the King of Armies there existed no other tie. They should have kept up an interchange of flattery, from afar: gravitating towards one another like celestial luminaries, if they reckoned themselves such; yet always with a due centrifugal force; for if either shot madly from his sphere, nothing but collision, and concussion, and mutual recoil, could be the consequence. On the whole, we must pity Frederick, environed with that cluster of Philosophers: doubtless he meant rather well; yet the French at Rosbach, with guns in their hands, were but a small matter, compared with these French in Sans-Souci. Maupertuis sits sullen, monosyllabic; gloomy like the bear of his own arctic zone: Voltaire is the mad piper that will make him dance to tunes and amuse the people. In this royal circle, with its parasites and bashaws, what heats and jealousies must there not have been; what secret heart-burnings, smoothed-faced malice, plottings,

counterplottings, and laurel-water pharmacy, in all its branches, before the ring of etiquette fairly burst asunder, and the establishment, so to speak, exploded! Yet over all these distressing matters Voltaire has thrown a soft veil of gayety: he remembers neither Doctor Akakia, nor Doctor Akakia's patron, with any animosity; but merely as actors in the grand farce of life along with him, a new scene of which has now commenced, quite displacing the other from the stage. The arrest at Frankfort, indeed, is a sour morsel; but this, too, he swallows, with an effort. Frederick, as we are given to understand, had these whims by kind; was, indeed, a wonderful scion from such a stock; for what could equal the avarice, malice, and rabid snappishness of old Frederick William, the father?

"He had a minister at the Hague, named Luicius," says the wit: "this Luicius was, of all royal ministers extant, the worst paid. The poor man, with a view to warm himself, had a few trees cut down, in the garden of Honslardik, then belonging to the House of Prussia; immediately thereafter he received dispatches from the king, his master, keeping back a year of his salary. Luicius, in despair, cut his throat with the only razor he had (*avec le seul rasoir qu'il eût*): an old lackey came to his assistance, and unfortunately saved his life. At an after period, I myself saw his Excellency at the Hague, and gave him an alms at the gate of that Palace called *La Vieille Cour*, which belongs to the King of Prussia, and where this unhappy Ambassador had lived twelve years."

With the *Roi-Philosophe* himself, Voltaire in a little while recommences correspondence; and to all appearance, proceeds quietly in his office of "buckwasher," that is, of verse-corrector to his majesty, as if nothing whatever had happened. . . .

Leaving out of view the worth or worthlessness of such a temper of mind, we are bound, in all seriousness, to say, both that it seems to have been Voltaire's highest conception of moral excellence, and that he has pursued and realized it with no small success. One great praise therefore he deserves,—that of unity with himself; that of *having* an aim, and steadfastly endeavoring after it, nay, as we have found, of attaining

it; for his ideal Voltaire seems, to an unusual degree, manifested, made practically apparent, in the real one. There can be no doubt that this attainment of *Persifleur*, in the wide sense we here give it, was of all others the most admired and sought after in Voltaire's age and country; nay, in our own age and country, we have still innumerable admirers of it, and unwearied seekers after it, on every hand of us: nevertheless, we cannot but believe that its acme is past—that the best sense of our generation has already weighed its significance, and found it wanting. Voltaire himself, it seems to us, were he alive at this day, would find other tasks than that of mockery, especially of mockery in that style. It is not by derision and denial, but by far deeper, more earnest, diviner means that aught truly great has been effected for mankind; that the fabric of man's life has been reared, through long centuries, to its present height. If we admit that this chief of *Persifleurs* had a steady, conscious aim in life, the still higher praise of having had a right or noble aim cannot be conceded him without many limitations, and may, plausibly enough, be altogether denied.

At the same time, let it not be forgotten, that amid all these blighting influences, Voltaire maintains a certain indestructible humanity of nature; a soul never deaf to the cry of wretchedness; never utterly blind to the light of truth, beauty, goodness. It is even, in some measure, poetically interesting to observe this fine contradiction in him: the heart acting without directions from the head, or perhaps against its directions; the man virtuous, as it were, in spite of himself. For at all events, it will be granted that, as a private man, his existence was beneficial, not hurtful, to his fellow-men: the Calases, the Sirvens, and so many orphans and outcasts whom he cherished and protected, ought to cover a multitude of sins. It was his own sentiment, and, to all appearance, a sincere one:

J'ai fait un peu de bien; c'est mon meilleur ouvrage.

Perhaps there are few men, with such principles and such

temptations as his were, that could have led such a life; few that could have done his work, and come through it with cleaner hands. If we call him the greatest of all *Persifleurs*, let us add that, morally speaking also, he is the best; if he excels all men in universality, sincerity, polished clearness of mockery, he perhaps combines with it as much worth of heart as, in any man, that habit can admit of. . . . . .

We have still to consider this man in his specially intellectual capacity, which, as with every man of letters, is to be regarded as the clearest, and, to all practical intents, the most important aspect of him. Voltaire's intellectual endowment and acquirement, his talent or genius as a literary man, lies opened to us in a series of Writings, unexampled, as we believe, in two respects—their extent, and their diversity. Perhaps there is no writer, not a mere compiler, but writing from his own invention or elaboration, who has left so many volumes behind him; and if to the merely arithmetical, we add a critical estimate, the singularity is still greater; for these volumes are not written without an appearance of due care and preparation; perhaps there is not one altogether feeble and confused treatise, nay, one feeble and confused sentence, to be found in them. As to variety, again, they range nearly over all human subjects—from Theology down to Domestic Economy; from the Familiar Letter to the Political History; from the Pasquinade to the Epic Poem. Some strange gift, or union of gifts, must have been at work here; for the result is, at least, in the highest degree uncommon, and to be wondered at, if not to be admired.

If through all this many-colored versatility, we try to decipher the essential, distinctive features of Voltaire's intellect, it seems to us that we find there a counterpart to our theory of his moral character; as, indeed, if that theory was accurate, we must do: for the thinking and the moral nature, distinguished by the necessities of speech, have no such distinction in themselves; but, rightly examined, exhibit in every case the strictest sympathy and correspondence; are, indeed, but different phases of the same indissoluble unity,—a living mind.

In life, Voltaire was found to be without good claim to the title of philosopher; and now, in literature, and for similar reasons, we find in him the same deficiencies. Here, too, it is not greatness, but the very extreme of expertness, that we recognize; not strength, so much as agility; not depth, but superficial extent. That truly surprising ability seems rather the unparalleled combination of many common talents, than the exercise of any finer or higher one: for here, too, the want of earnestness, of intense continuance, is fatal to him. He has the eye of a lynx; sees deeper, at the first glance, than any other man; but no second glance is given. Thus Truth, which, to the philosopher, has from of old been said to live in a well, remains for the most part hidden from him; we may say forever hidden, if we take the highest and only philosophical species of Truth; for this does not reveal itself to any mortal, without quite another sort of meditation than Voltaire ever seems to have bestowed on it. In fact, his deductions are uniformly of a forensic, argumentative, immediately practical nature, often true, we will admit, so far as they go; but not the whole truth; and false, when taken for the whole. In regard to feeling, it is the same with him: he is, in general, humane, mildly affectionate, not without touches of nobleness; but light, fitful, discontinuous; "a smart free-thinker, all things in an hour." He is no Poet and Philosopher, but a popular sweet Singer and Haranguer; in all senses, and in all styles, *Concionator*, which, for the most part, will turn out to be an altogether different character. It is true, in this last province he stands unrivalled; for such an audience, the most fit and perfectly persuasive of all preachers: but in many far higher provinces, he is neither perfect nor unrivalled; has been often surpassed; was surpassed even in his own age and nation. For a decisive, thorough-going, in any measure gigantic, force of thought, he is far inferior to Diderot; with all the liveliness, he has not the soft elegance; with more than the wit, he has but a small portion of the wisdom that belonged to Fontenelle: as in real sensibility, so in the delineation of it, in pathos, loftiness, and earnest eloquence, he cannot, making

all fair abatements, and there are many, be compared with Rousseau.

Doubtless, an astonishing fertility, quickness, address; an openness also, and universal susceptibility of mind, must have belonged to him. As little can we deny that he manifests an assiduous perseverance, a capability of long-continued exertion, strange in so volatile a man; and consummate skill in husbanding and wisely directing his exertion. The very knowledge he had amassed, granting, which is but partly true, that it was superficial, remembered knowledge, might have distinguished him as a mere Dutch commentator. From Newton's *Principia* to the *Shaster* and *Vedam*, nothing has escaped him; he has glanced into all literatures and all sciences; nay, studied in them, for he can speak a rational word on all. It is known, for instance, that he understood Newton when no other man in France understood him; indeed, his countrymen may call Voltaire their discoverer of intellectual England,—a discovery, it is true, rather of the Curtis than of the Columbus sort, yet one which in his day still remained to be made. Nay, from all sides he brings new light into his country: now, for the first time, to the upturned wondering eyes of Frenchmen in general, does it become clear that Thought has actually a kind of existence in other kingdoms; that some glimmerings of civilization had dawned here and there on the human species prior to the *Siècle de Louis Quatorze.* Of Voltaire's acquaintance with History, at least with what he called History, be it civil, religious, or literary; of his indescribable collection of facts, gathered from all sources,—from European Chronicles and State Papers, from Eastern *Zends* and Jewish Talmuds,—we need not remind any reader. It has been objected that his information was often borrowed at second-hand; that he had his plodders and pioneers, whom, as living dictionaries, he skilfully consulted in time of need. This also seems to be partly true, but deducts little from our estimate of him: for the skill *so* to borrow is even rarer than the power to lend. Voltaire's knowledge is not a mere show-room of curiosities, but truly a museum for purposes of teaching: every object is

in its place, and there for its uses; nowhere do we find confusion or vain display; everywhere intention, instructiveness, and the clearest order.

Perhaps it is this very power of Order, of rapid, perspicuous Arrangement, that lies at the root of Voltaire's best gifts; or rather, we should say, it is that keen, accurate intellectual vision, from which, to a mind of any intensity, Order naturally arises. This clear, quick vision, and the methodic arrangement which springs from it, are looked upon as peculiarly French qualities; and Voltaire, at all times, manifests them in a more than French degree. Let him but cast his eye over any subject, in a moment he sees, though indeed only to a short depth, yet with instinctive decision, where the main bearings of it for that short depth lie; what is, or appears to be, its logical coherence; how causes connect themselves with effects; how the whole is to be seized, and in lucid sequence represented to his own or to other minds. In this respect, moreover, it is happy for him that, below the short depth alluded to, his view does not properly grow dim, but altogether terminates; thus there is nothing further to occasion him misgivings; has he not already sounded into that basis of bottomless Darkness on which all things firmly rest? What lies below is delusion, imagination, some form of Superstition or Folly; which he, nothing doubting, altogether casts away. Accordingly, he is the most intelligible of writers; everywhere transparent at a glance. There is no delineation or disquisition of his that has not its whole purport written on its forehead; all is precise, all is rightly adjusted; that keen spirit of Order shows itself in the whole, and in every line of the whole.

If we say that this power of Arrangement, as applied both to the acquisition and to the communication of ideas, is Voltaire's most serviceable faculty in all his enterprises, we say nothing singular: for take the word in its largest acceptation, and it comprehends the whole office of Understanding, logically so called; is the means whereby man accomplishes whatever, in the way of outward force, has been made possible for him; conquers all practicable obstacles, and rises to be the

"king of this lower world." It is the organ of all that Knowledge which can properly be reckoned synonymous with Power; for hereby man strikes, with wise aim, into the infinite agencies of Nature, and multiplies his own small strength to unlimited degrees. It has been said also that man may rise to be the "god of this lower world;" but that is a far loftier height, not attainable by such powerful knowledge, but by quite another sort, for which Voltaire in particular shows hardly any aptitude.

In truth, readily as we have recognized his spirit of Method, with its many uses, we are far from ascribing to him any perceptible portion of that greatest praise in thinking, or in writing, the praise of philosophic, still less of poetic Method, which, especially the latter, must be the fruit of deep feeling as well as of clear vision,—of genius as well as of talent; and is much more likely to be found in the compositions of a Hooker or a Shakspeare than of a Voltaire. The Method discernible in Voltaire, and this on all subjects whatever, is a purely business Method. The order that arises from it is not Beauty, but, at best, Regularity. His objects do not lie round him in pictorial, not always in scientific grouping; but rather in commodious rows, where each may be seen and come at, like goods in a well-kept warehouse. We might say there is not the deep natural symmetry of a forest oak, but the simple artificial symmetry of a parlor chandelier. Compare, for example, the plan of the *Henriade* to that of our so barbarous *Hamlet*. The plan of the former is a geometrical diagram by Fermat; that of the latter, a cartoon by Raphael. The *Henriade*, as we see it completed, is a polished, square-built Tuileries; *Hamlet* is a mysterious, star-paved Valhalla, and dwelling of the gods.

Nevertheless, Voltaire's style of Method is, as we have said, a business one; and, for his purposes, more available than any other. It carries him swiftly through his work, and carries his reader swiftly through it; there is a prompt intelligence between the two; the whole meaning is communicated clearly, and comprehended without effort. From this also it may follow, that Voltaire will please the young more than he does

the old; that the first perusal of him will please better than the second, if indeed any second be thought necessary. But what merit (and it is considerable) the pleasure and profit of this first perusal presupposes, must be honestly allowed him. Herein, it seems to us, lies the grand quality in all his performances. Those Histories of his, for instance, are felt, in spite of their sparkling rapidity and knowing air of philosophic insight, to be among the shallowest of all histories; mere beadrolls of exterior occurrences, of battles, edifices, enactments, and other quite superficial phenomena; yet being clear beadrolls, well adapted for memory, and recited in a lively tone, we listen with satisfaction, and learn somewhat; learn much, if we began knowing nothing. Nay, sometimes the summary, in its skilful though crowded arrangement, and brilliant well-defined outlines, has almost a poetical as well as a didactic merit. *Charles the Twelfth* may still pass for a model in that often-attempted species of Biography: the clearest details are given in the fewest words; we have sketches of strange men and strange countries, of wars, adventures, negotiations, in a style which, for graphic brevity, rivals that of Sallust. It is a line-engraving, on a reduced scale, of that Swede and his mad life; without colors, yet not without the foreshortenings and perspective observances,—nay, not altogether without the deeper harmonies which belong to a true Picture. In respect of composition, whatever may be said of its accuracy or worth otherwise, we cannot but reckon it greatly the best of Voltaire's Histories.

In his other prose works, in his Novels, and innumerable Essays and fugitive pieces, the same clearness of order, the same rapid precision of view, again forms a distinguishing merit. His *Zadigs* and *Baboucs* and *Candides*, which, considered as products of imagination, perhaps rank higher with foreigners than any of his professedly poetical performances, are instinct with this sort of intellectual life: the sharpest glances, though from an oblique point of sight, into at least the surface of human life, into the old familiar world of business, which truly from his oblique station looks oblique enough,

and yields store of ridiculous combinations. The Wit, manifested chiefly in these and the like performances, but ever flowing, unless purposely restrained, in boundless abundance from Voltaire's mind, has been often and duly celebrated. It lay deep-rooted in his nature; the inevitable produce of such an understanding with such a character, and was from the first likely, as it actually proved in the latter period of his life, to become the main dialect in which he spoke and even thought. Doing all justice to the inexhaustible readiness, the quick force, the polished acuteness of Voltaire's Wit, we may remark, at the same time, that it was nowise the highest species of employment for such a mind as his; that, indeed, it ranks essentially among the lowest species even of Ridicule. It is at all times mere logical pleasantry; a gayety of the head, not of the heart; there is scarcely a twinkling of Humor in the whole of his numberless sallies. Wit of this sort cannot maintain a demure sedateness; a grave yet infinitely kind aspect, warming the inmost soul with true loving mirth; it has not even the force to laugh outright, but can only sniff and titter. It grounds itself, not on fond, sportful sympathy, but on contempt, or, at best, on indifference. It stands related to Humor as Prose does to Poetry; of which, in this department at least, Voltaire exhibits no symptom. The most determinedly ludicrous composition of his, the *Pucelle*, which cannot on other grounds be recommended to any reader, has no higher merit than that of an audacious caricature. True, he is not a buffoon; seldom or never violates the rules, we shall not say of propriety, yet of good breeding: to this negative praise he is entitled. But as for any high claim to positive praise, it cannot be made good. We look in vain, through his whole writings, for one lineament of a *Quixote* or a *Shandy;* even of a *Hudibras* or *Battle of the Books*. Indeed, it has been more than once observed, that Humor is not a national gift with the French in late times; that since Montaigne's day it seems to have well-nigh vanished from among them.

Considered in his technical capacity of Poet, Voltaire need not, at present, detain us very long. Here, too, his excellence

is chiefly intellectual, and shown in the way of business-like method. Every thing is well calculated for a given end; there is the utmost logical fitness of sentiment, of incident, of general contrivance. Nor is he without an enthusiasm that sometimes resembles inspiration; a clear fellow-feeling for the personages of his scene he always has; with a chameleon susceptibility he takes some hue of every object; if he cannot *be* that object, he at least plausibly enacts it. Thus we have a result everywhere consistent with itself; a contrivance, not without nice adjustments, and brilliant aspects, which pleases with that old pleasure of "difficulties overcome," and the visible correspondence of means to end. That the deeper portion of our soul sits silent, unmoved under all this; recognizing no universal, everlasting Beauty, but only a modish Elegance, less the work of poetical creation than a process of the toilette, need occasion no surprise. It signifies only that Voltaire was a French Poet, and wrote as the French people of that day required and approved. We have long known that French poetry aimed at a different result than ours; that its splendor was what we should call a dead, artificial one; not the manifold soft summer glories of Nature, but a cold splendor, as of polished metal.

. . . . He was not without an eye to have looked, had he seen others looking, into the deepest nature of poetry; nor has he failed here and there to cast a glance in that direction: but what preferment could such enterprises earn for him in the *Café de Procope?* What could it profit his all-precious "fame" to pursue them further? In the end, he seems to have heartily reconciled himself to use and wont, and striven only to do better what he saw all others doing. Yet his private poetical creed, which could not be a catholic one, was, nevertheless, scarcely so bigoted as might have been looked for. That censure of Shakspeare, which elicited a re-censure in England, perhaps rather deserved a "recommendatory epistle," all things being considered. He calls Shakspeare "a genius full of force and fertility, of nature and sublimity," though unhappily "without the smallest spark of good taste, or the smallest acquaintance with the rules," which, in Voltaire's dialect, is not

so false; Shakspeare having really almost no Parisian *bon goût* whatever, and walking through "*the* rules," so often as he sees good, with the most astonishing tranquillity. . . . .

. . . . On the whole, it would appear that Voltaire's view of poetry was radically different from ours; that, in fact, of what we should strictly call poetry, he had almost no view whatever. A Tragedy, a Poem, with him is not to be "a manifestation of man's Reason in forms suitable to his Sense;" but rather a highly complex egg-dance, to be danced before the King to a given tune, and without breaking a single egg. Nevertheless, let justice be shown to him, and to French poetry at large. This latter is a peculiar growth of our modern ages; has been laboriously cultivated, and is not without its own value. . . . .

From the peculiar gifts of the French, and their peculiar spiritual position, we may expect, had they once more attained to an original style, many important benefits, and important accessions to the Literature of the World. Meanwhile, in considering and duly estimating what that people has, in past times, accomplished, Voltaire must always be reckoned among their most meritorious Poets. Inferior in what we may call general poetic temperament to Racine; greatly inferior, in some points of it, to Corneille, he has an intellectual vivacity, a quickness both of sight and of invention, which belongs to neither of these two. We believe that, among foreign nations, his Tragedies, such works as *Zaire* and *Mahomet*, are considerably the most esteemed of this school.

However, it is nowise as a Poet, Historian, or Novelist, that Voltaire stands so prominent in Europe; but chiefly as a religious Polemic, as a vehement opponent of the Christian Faith. Viewed in this last character, he may give rise to many grave reflections, only a small portion of which can here be so much as glanced at. We may say, in general, that his style of controversy is of a piece with himself; not a higher, and scarcely a lower style than might have been expected from him. As in a moral point of view, Voltaire nowise wanted a love of truth, yet had withal a still deeper love of his own interest in truth; was, therefore, intrinsically no Philosopher, but a highly-

accomplished Trivialist; so likewise, in an intellectual point of view, he manifests himself ingenious and adroit, rather than noble or comprehensive; fights for truth or victory, not by patient meditation, but by light sarcasm, whereby victory may indeed, for a time, be gained; but little Truth, what can be named Truth, especially in such matters as this, is to be looked for.

No one, we suppose, ever arrogated for Voltaire any praise of originality in this discussion; we suppose there is not a single idea, of any moment, relating to the Christian religion, in all his multifarious writings, that had not been set forth again and again before his enterprises commenced. The labors of a very mixed multitude, from Porphyry down to Shaftesbury, including Hobbeses, Tindals, Tolands, some of them skeptics of a much nobler class, had left little room for merit in this kind: nay, Bayle, his own countryman, had just finished a life spent in preaching skepticism precisely similar, and by methods precisely similar, when Voltaire appeared on the arena. Indeed, skepticism, as we have before observed, was at this period universal among the higher ranks in France, with whom Voltaire chiefly associated. It is only in the merit and demerit of grinding down this grain into food for the people, and inducing so many to eat of it, that Voltaire can claim any singularity. However, we quarrel not with him on this head: there may be cases where the want of originality is even a moral merit. But it is a much more serious ground of offence that he intermeddled in Religion without being himself, in any measure, Religious; that he entered the Temple and continued there, with a levity which, in any Temple where men worship, can beseem no brother man; that, in a word, he ardently, and with long-continued effort, warred against Christianity, without understanding beyond the mere superficies of what Christianity was.

His polemical procedure in this matter, it appears to us, must now be admitted to have been, on the whole, a shallow one. Through all its manifold forms, and involutions, and repetitions, it turns, we believe exclusively, on one point—what Theologians have called the "plenary Inspiration of the Scrip-

tures." This is the single wall against which, through long years, and with innumerable battering-rams and catapults and pop-guns, he unweariedly batters. Concede him this, and his ram swings freely, to and fro, through space; there is nothing further it can even aim at. That the Sacred Books could be aught else than a Bank-of-Faith Bill, for such and such quantities of Enjoyment, payable at sight in the other world, value received; which bill becomes waste paper, the stamp being questioned:—that the Christian Religion could have any deeper foundation than Books, could possibly be written in the purest nature of man, in mysterious, ineffaceable characters, to which Books, and all Revelations and authentic traditions, were but a subsidiary matter, were but as the *light* whereby that divine *writing* was to be read;—nothing of this seems to have, even in the faintest manner, occurred to him. Yet herein, as we believe that the whole world has now begun to discover, lies the real essence of the question; by the negative or affirmative decision of which the Christian Religion, any thing that is worth calling by that name, must fall, or endure forever. We believe, also, that the wiser minds of our age have already come to agreement on this question; or rather, never were divided regarding it. Christianity, the "Worship of Sorrow," has been recognized as divine, on far other grounds than "Essays on Miracles," and by considerations infinitely deeper than would avail in any mere "trial by jury." He who argues against it or for it, in this manner, may be regarded as mistaking its nature: the Ithuriel, though to our eyes he wears a body and the fashion of armor, cannot be wounded with material steel. Our fathers were wiser than we, when they said in deepest earnestness, what we often hear in shallow mockery, that Religion is "not of Sense, but of Faith;" not of Understanding, but of Reason. He who finds himself without this latter, who by all his studying has failed to unfold it in himself, may have studied to great or to small purpose, we say not which; but of the Christian Religion, as of many other things, he has and can have no knowledge.

The Christian Doctrine we often hear likened to the Greek

Philosophy, and found, on all hands, some measurable way superior to it; but this also seems a mistake. The Christian Doctrine, that doctrine of Humility, in all senses, godlike, and the parent of all godlike virtues, is not superior, or inferior, or equal, to any doctrine of Socrates or Thales; being of a totally different nature; differing from these, as a perfect Ideal Poem does from a Correct Computation in Arithmetic. He who compares it with such standards may lament that, beyond the mere letter, the purport of this divine Humility has never been disclosed to him; that the loftiest feeling hitherto vouchsafed to mankind is as yet hidden from his eyes.

For the rest, the question how Christianity originated is doubtless a high question; resolvable enough, if we view only its surface, which was all that Voltaire saw of it; involved in sacred, silent, unfathomable depths, if we investigate its interior meanings; which meanings, indeed, it may be, every new age will develop to itself in a new manner, and with new degrees of light; for the whole truth may be called infinite, and to man's eye discernible only in parts: but the question itself is nowise the ultimate one in this matter.

We understand ourselves to be risking no new assertion, but simply reporting what is already the conviction of the greatest in our age, when we say,—that cheerfully recognizing, gratefully appropriating whatever Voltaire has proved, or any other man has proved, or shall prove, the Christian Religion, once here, cannot again pass away; that, in one or the other form, it will endure through all time; that, as in Scripture, so also in the heart of man, is written, "the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Were the memory of this Faith never so obscured, as, indeed, in all times, the coarse passions and perceptions of the world do all but obliterate it in the hearts of most; yet in every pure soul, in every Poet and Wise Man, it finds a new Missionary, a new Martyr, till the great volume of Universal History is finally closed, and man's destinies are fulfilled in this earth. "It is a height to which the human species were fated and enabled to attain; and from which, having once attained it, they can never retrograde."

These things, which it were far out of our place to attempt adequately elucidating here, must not be left out of sight, in appreciating Voltaire's polemical worth. We find no trace of these, or of any the like essential considerations having been present with him, in examining the Christian Religion; nor indeed was it consistent with his general habits that they should be so. Totally destitute of religious Reverence, even of common practical seriousness; by nature or habit, undevout both in heart and head; not only without any Belief, in other than a material sense, but without the possibility of acquiring any, he can be no safe or permanently useful guide in this investigation. We may consider him as having opened the way to future inquirers of a truer spirit; but for his own part, as having engaged in an enterprise, the real nature of which was well-nigh unknown to him; and engaged in it with the issue to be anticipated in such a case; producing chiefly confusion, dislocation, destruction, on all hands; so that the good he achieved is still, in these times, found mixed with an alarming proportion of evil, from which, indeed, men rationally doubt whether much of it will in any time be separable.

We should err widely, too, if in estimating what quantity, altogether overlooking what quality, of intellect Voltaire may have manifested on this occasion, we took the result produced as any measure of the force applied. His task was not one of Affirmation, but of Denial; not a task of erecting and rearing up, which is slow and laborious; but of destroying and overturning, which in most cases is rapid and far easier. The force necessary for him was nowise a great and noble one; but a small, in some respects a mean one, to be nimbly and seasonably put in use. The Ephesian Temple, which it had employed many wise heads and strong arms, for a lifetime, to build, could be *un*-built by one madman, in a single hour.

Of such errors, deficiencies, and positive misdeeds, it appears to us, a just criticism must accuse Voltaire: at the same time, we can nowise join in the condemnatory clamor which so many worthy persons, not without the best intentions, to this day keep up against him. His whole character seems to be plain

enough, common enough, had not extraneous influences so perverted our views regarding it: nor, morally speaking, is it a worse character, but considerably a better one, than belongs to the mass of men. Voltaire's aims in opposing the Christian Religion were unhappily of a mixed nature: yet, after all, very nearly such aims as we have often seen directed against it, and often seen directed in its favor: a little love of finding Truth, with a great love of making Proselytes; which last is in itself a natural, universal feeling; and if honest, is, even in the worst cases, a subject for pity, rather than for hatred. As a light, careless, courteous Man of the World, he offers no hateful aspect; on the contrary, a kindly, gay, rather amiable one: hundreds of men, with half his worth of disposition, die daily, and their little world laments them. It is time that he too should be judged of by his intrinsic, not by his accidental qualities; that justice should be done to him also; for injustice can profit no man and no cause.

In fact, Voltaire's chief merits belong to Nature and himself; his chief faults are of his time and country. In that famous era of the Pompadours and *Encyclopédies*, he forms the main figure; and was such, we have seen, more by resembling the multitude, than by differing from them. It was a strange age that of Louis XV.; in several points, a novel one in the history of mankind. In regard to its luxury and depravity, to the high culture of all merely practical and material faculties, and the entire torpor of all the purely contemplative and spiritual, this era considerably resembles that of the Roman Emperors. There, too, was external splendor and internal squalor; the highest completeness in all sensual arts, including among these not cookery and its adjuncts alone, but even "effect-painting" and "effect-writing;" only the art of virtuous living was a lost one. Instead of Love for Poetry, there was "Taste" for it; refinement in manners, with utmost coarseness in morals: in a word, the strange spectacle of a social system, embracing large, cultivated portions of the human species, and founded only on Atheism. With the Romans, things went what we should call their natural course: Liberty, public spirit,

quietly declined into a *caput-mortuum;* Self-love, Materialism, Baseness even to the disbelief in all possibility of Virtue, stalked more and more imperiously abroad; till the body-politic, long since deprived of its vital circulating fluids, had now become a putrid carcass, and fell in pieces to be the prey of ravenous wolves. Then was there, under those Attilas and Alarics, a world's spectacle of destruction and despair, compared with which the often-commemorated "horrors of the French Revolution," and all Napoleon's wars, were but the gay jousting of a tournament to the sack of stormed cities. Our European community has escaped the like dire consummation; and by causes, which, as may be hoped, will always secure it from such. Nay, were there no other cause, it may be asserted, that in a commonwealth where the Christian religion exists, where it once has existed, public and private Virtue, the basis of all Strength, never can become extinct; but in every new age, and even from the deepest decline, there is a chance, and in the course of ages, a certainty of renovation. . . . . .

Considering the then position of affairs, it is not singular that the age of Louis XV. should have been what it was; an age without nobleness, without high virtues, or high manifestations of talent; an age of shallow clearness, of polish, self-conceit, skepticism, and all forms of *Persiflage.* As little does it seem surprising, or peculiarly blamable, that Voltaire, the leading man of that age, should have partaken largely of all its qualities. True, his giddy activity took serious effect, the light firebrands which he so carelessly scattered abroad, kindled fearful conflagrations: but in these there has been good as well as evil; nor is it just that, even for the latter, he, a limited mortal, should be charged with more than mortal's responsibility. After all, that parched, blighted period, and the period of earthquakes and tornadoes which followed it, have now well-nigh cleared away: they belong to the Past, and for us and those that come after us, are not without their benefits, and calm historical meaning. . . . .

. . . . Let no man doubt that Voltaire and his disciples, like all men and all things that live and act in God's world, will

one day be found to have "worked together for good." Nay, that with all his evil, he has already accomplished good, must be admitted in the soberest calculation. How much do we include in this one little word: He gave the death-stab to modern Superstition. *That* horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, shunning the light, is passing away; with all its racks, and poison-chalices, and foul sleeping-draughts, is passing away without return. He who sees even a little way into the signs of the times, sees well that both the Smithfield fires and the Edinburgh thumbscrews (for these too must be held in remembrance) are things which have long, very long, lain behind us; divided from us by a wall of centuries, transparent, indeed, but more impassable than adamant. For, as we said, Superstition is in its death lair; the last agonies may endure for decades, or for centuries; but it carries the iron in its heart, and will not vex the earth any more.

That, with Superstition, Religion is also passing away, seems to us a still more ungrounded fear. Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky; but the stars are there, and will reappear. On the whole, we must repeat the often-repeated saying, that it is unworthy a religious man to view an irreligious one either with alarm or aversion or with any other feeling than regret, and hope, and brotherly commiseration. If he seek Truth, is he not our brother, and to be pitied? If he do not seek truth, is he not still our brother, and to be pitied still more? Old Ludovicus Vives has a story of a clown that killed his ass because it had drunk up the moon, and he thought the world could ill spare that luminary. So he killed his ass, *ut lunam redderet.* The clown was well-intentioned but unwise. Let us not imitate him; let us not slay a faithful servant who has carried us far. He has not drunk the moon; but only the *reflection* of the moon, in his own poor water-pail, where, too, it may be, he was drinking with purposes the most harmless.

THE

HISTORY OF CHARLES XII,

KING OF SWEDEN.

A DISCOURSE ON THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII,

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION.

Few are the princes whose lives merit a particular history. In vain have most of them been the objects of slander, or of flattery. Small is the number of those whose memory is preserved; and that number would be still more inconsiderable, were none but the good remembered.

The princes who have the best claim to immortality are such as have benefited mankind. Thus, while France endures, the affection of Louis XII for his people will ever be had in grateful remembrance. The great failings of Francis I will be excused, for the sake of the arts and sciences of which he was the father. Blessed will be the memory of Henry IV, who conquered his kingdom as much by his clemency as by his valor. And the munificence of Louis XIV in protecting the arts which owed their birth to Francis I will ever be extolled.

It is for a very different reason, that the memory of bad princes is preserved; like fires, plagues, and inundations, they are remembered only for the mischief they have done.

Conquerors hold a middle rank between good kings and tyrants, but are most akin to the latter. As they have a glaring reputation, we are desirous of knowing the most minute circumstances of their lives; for such is the weakness of mankind, that they admire those who have rendered themselves remarkable for wickedness, and talk with greater pleasure of the destroyer than of the founder of an empire.

As for those princes who have distinguished themselves neither in peace nor in war,—who have been remarkable neither

for great virtues nor great vices,—their lives furnish so little matter, either for imitation or instruction, that they are not worthy of being committed to writing. Of so many emperors of Rome, Greece, Germany and Muscovy,—of so many sultans, caliphs, popes, and kings,—how few are there whose names deserve to be recorded anywhere but in chronological tables, where they only serve to mark the different epochs!

There is a *vulgar* among princes, as well as among the rest of mankind; yet such is the rage for writing, that no sooner is a prince dead, than the world is filled with volumes under the title of memoirs and histories of his life, and anecdotes of his court. By these means books have been multiplied in such a manner, that were a man to live a hundred years, and to employ them all in reading, he would not have time to run over what has been published relating to the history of Europe alone, for the last two centuries.

This eager and unreasonable desire of transmitting useless stories to posterity, and of fixing the attention of future ages upon common events, proceeds from a weakness extremely incident to those who have lived in courts, and have unhappily been engaged in the management of public affairs. They consider the court in which they have lived as the most magnificent in the world; their king as the greatest monarch; and the affairs in which they have been concerned as the most important that ever were transacted. They vainly imagine that posterity will view all these things in the same light.

If a prince undertakes a war, or his court is embroiled in cabals and intrigues; if he buys the friendship of one of his neighbors, or sells his own to another; if, after some victories and defeats, he at last makes peace with his enemies; his subjects are so warmed and interested by the part which they themselves have acted in these scenes, that they regard their own age as the most glorious that has existed since the creation. But what happens? Why, this prince dies; new measures are adopted; men forget the intrigues of his court, his mistresses, his ministers, his generals, his wars, and even himself.

Ever since the time that Christian princes have been en-

deavoring to cheat one another, and have alternately been making war and peace, they have signed an immense number of treaties, and fought as many battles; they have performed many glorious, and many infamous actions. Nevertheless, should all this heap of transactions be transmitted to posterity, they would most of them destroy and annihilate each other; and the memory of those only would remain which have produced great revolutions, or which, being related by able writers, are preserved from oblivion, like the pictures of obscure persons, drawn by a masterly hand.

Sensible then, as we are, of the truth of these observations, we should not have added a particular history of Charles XII, king of Sweden, to the infinite number of books with which the world is already crowded, were it not that he and his rival, Peter Alexiovitch, by far the greater man of the two, are universally allowed to be the most illustrious persons that have appeared for upwards of twenty centuries. The trifling pleasure, however, of relating extraordinary events was not our only motive for engaging in this work; we flattered ourselves that it might be of some little use to princes, should it ever happen to fall into their hands. No king, surely, can be so incorrigible as, when he reads the history of Charles XII, not to be cured of the vain ambition of making conquests. Where is the prince that can say, "I have more courage, more virtues, more resolution, greater strength of body, greater skill in war, or better troops, than Charles XII?" And yet, if, with all these advantages, and after so many victories, Charles was so unfortunate, what fate may other princes expect, who, with less capacity and fewer resources, shall entertain the same ambitious views?

This history is composed from the relations of some persons of distinction, who lived several years with Charles XII, and with Peter the Great, emperor of Muscovy; and who having retired, long after the death of these princes, into a country of liberty, can have no interest in concealing the truth. M. Fabricius, who lived in the most intimate familiarity with Charles XII; M. de Fierville, the French ambassador; M. de

Villelongue, a colonel in the Swedish service, and even M. Poniatowski, have all of them contributed their share in furnishing me with materials.

In this work we have not ventured to advance a single fact, without consulting eye-witnesses of undoubted veracity; a circumstance that renders this history very different from those gazettes which have already been published under the title of Lives of Charles XII. If we have omitted some little skirmishes between the Swedish and Muscovite officers, the reason is, that we mean to write the history, not of these officers, but only of the King of Sweden, and even of his life none but the most important events. The history of a prince, in our opinion, is not to relate every thing he did, but only what he did worthy of being transmitted to posterity.

Here it may not be improper to remark, that many things which were true at the time of writing this history in 1728, are not so at present.[1] Commerce, for instance, begins to be more encouraged in Sweden. The Polish infantry are better disciplined, and are provided with regimental clothes, a convenience which they then wanted. In reading history, one ought always to remember the time in which the author wrote. A man who should only read the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz, would take the French for a set of enthusiasts, breathing nothing but faction, madness, and civil discord; he who should read only the history of the happy years of Louis XIV, would think they were born to obey, to conquer, and to cultivate the fine arts; and, should any one consult the memoirs of the first years of Louis XV, he will find them devoted to luxury and avarice, and too regardless of every thing else. The Spaniards at present are not the Spaniards of Charles V, and yet they may be so in a few years. The English of this age bear no more resemblance to the fanatics in Cromwell's time, than the monks and monsignori, that crowd the streets of Rome, do to the ancient Scipios. I doubt much whether the Swedish

[1] 1789.

troops could be rendered, all of a sudden, so hardy and warlike as were those of Charles XII. We say of a man, that he was brave at such a time; in like manner we should say, in speaking of a nation, it was of this or that character in such a year, and under such a government.

Should any princes or ministers meet with disagreeable truths in this book, let them remember, that, as they act in a public station, they ought to give the public an account of their conduct. Such is the price they must pay for their greatness. The business of an historian is to record, not to flatter; and the only way to oblige mankind to speak well of us, is to contribute all that lies in our power to their happiness and welfare.

LETTER

To Mareschal Schulenburg, General of the Venetians.[1]

Sir,—I have received by a courier of the French ambassador, the journal of your campaign in 1703 and 1704, with which your excellency has been pleased to honor me. Allow me, sir, to apply to you what an ancient writer said of Cæsar: *Eodem animo scripsit quo bellavit.* You must expect, sir, that so great a favor will make me extremely selfish, and will expose you to fresh requests. I beg you to communicate to me whatever can give me any light on other events of the war of Charles XII. I have the honor to send you a journal of that king's campaigns,—a king worthy of having fought with you. This journal reaches to the battle of Poltava inclusive. It is the work of a Swedish officer, called Adlerfeld, who appears to be extremely well informed, and as accurate as it is possible to be on a subject of this nature. It is not a history; far from it; but it contains excellent materials for the composition of a his-

[1] Dated at the Hague, Sept. 15, 1740.

tory; and I flatter myself I shall be able to correct mine in many particulars by the memoirs of this officer.

Besides, sir, I must own to you it was with particular pleasure I found in these memoirs a variety of circumstances that tally exactly with the information from which I compiled my history. I, who doubt of every thing, and especially of anecdotes, began to condemn myself touching a number of facts which I had advanced. For instance, I could no longer believe that M. de Guiscard, the French ambassador, was on board the ship of Charles XII in the expedition to Copenhagen. I began to repent of having said that the cardinal primate, who had so great a hand in dethroning King Augustus, secretly opposed the election of King Stanislaus. I was almost ashamed of having affirmed that the Duke of Marlborough, when he went to have a conference with Charles XII, addressed himself to Baron Görtz before he saw Count Piper. M. de la Motraye had censured me for all these facts, with a confidence which, I imagined, could proceed from nothing but better information; notwithstanding which, they are all confirmed by the Memoirs of Adlerfeld.

In these memoirs I find that the King of Sweden, as I had said, sometimes ate with King Augustus, whom he had dethroned, and that he always gave him the right hand. In them I find, that the kings Augustus and Stanislaus met at the court of the latter, and saluted each other without exchanging a word. There, likewise, mention is made of the extraordinary visit which Charles paid to Augustus at Dresden, upon leaving his dominions. There, even, the witticism of Baron Stralheim is quoted word for word, in the same manner as I have related it.

The preface of M. Adlerfeld's book, in fine, contains the following passage:

"With regard to M. de la Motraye, who has officiously undertaken to criticise M. de Voltaire, the perusal of these memoirs will only serve to confound him, and make him sensible of his own errors, which are much more numerous than those he imputes to his adversary."

True it is, sir, and I plainly perceive it by this journal, I have been mistaken with regard to the minute circumstances of several military transactions. I had, indeed, ascertained the exact number of the Swedish and Muscovite troops at the famous battle of Narva; but on many other occasions I have fallen into mistakes. Time, you know, is the parent of truth; which, after all, I am afraid we have but little reason to hope we shall ever be fully able to discover. You will see, sir, that M. Adlerfeld does not agree with you concerning some points relating to your admirable passage over the Oder; but I will believe the German general, who must necessarily have known all the particulars of this passage, much rather than the Swedish officer, who could not possibly know more than a part of them.

By the memoirs of your excellency, and by those of this officer, I intend to correct my history. I likewise expect an extract of a history of Charles XII, written in Swedish by M. Norberg, chaplain to that monarch.

Indeed, I am much afraid that the chaplain has sometimes viewed matters with other eyes than the ministers, who have furnished me with materials. I shall esteem him, to be sure, for his zeal in defending the honor of his master; but I, who never was chaplain to the king, nor to the czar; I, whose sole ambition is to speak the truth, will always acknowledge, that the inflexible obstinacy of Charles XII at Bender, his resolution of lying six months in bed, and many of his measures after the unhappy battle of Poltava, appear to me more extraordinary than heroic.

If there is any possibility of rendering history useful, it is only, in my opinion, by pointing out the good and ill which kings have done to mankind. I think, for instance, that if Charles XII, after having subdued Denmark, beaten the Russians, deposed his enemy Augustus, and established the new king on the throne of Poland, had granted peace to the czar, who begged it of him; had he returned home the conqueror and peacemaker of the North, and employed his attention in encouraging the arts and commerce in his country, he would then

indeed have been truly a great man, instead of being but a great warrior, vanquished at last by a prince whom he despised. It were to be wished, for the happiness of the world, that Peter the Great had been sometimes less cruel, and Charles XII less obstinate.

I greatly prefer to both these sovereigns, a prince who regards humanity as the chief virtue, who never has recourse to war but by absolute necessity, who loves peace because he loves mankind, who encourages all the arts, and who, in one word, though a king, endeavors to act like a sage. Such, sir, is my hero; nor think that it is only a creature of the imagination. This hero actually exists in the person of a young king,[1] whose fame will soon reach even to your parts; you will then see whether or not I am deceived: he deserves such generals as you. To write the history of such kings is a pleasing task; for then we write the history of human happiness.

But if you carefully examine this journal of M. Adlerfeld, you will find in it little else, but that, on Monday the third of April, there were so many thousand men butchered in such a field; that, on Tuesday, whole villages were reduced to ashes, and the women, clasping their little babes in their arms, were consumed with them in the same flames; that, on Thursday, a thousand bombs levelled the houses of a free and innocent city with the ground, for not having paid immediately a hundred thousand crowns to a foreign conqueror who happened to pass by its walls; and that, on Friday, fifteen or sixteen hundred prisoners perished with cold and hunger. These, or such as these, are the materials which compose the subject of his four volumes.

Have you not frequently thought, M. le Mareschal, that your illustrious trade is still more hideous than necessary? I see M. Adlerfeld sometimes disguises cruelties, which ought, in fact, to be forgotten, in order to prevent their ever becoming the object of imitation. For example, I have been credibly informed, that, at the battle of Fraustadt, Marshal Rehnskiöld

[1] Frederick the Great.

caused twelve or fifteen hundred Muscovites to be put to death in cold blood, six hours after the action, though they begged their lives on their knees. He alleges there were only six hundred, and that they were put to death immediately after the battle. This is a circumstance, sir, of which you cannot be ignorant; you made the admirable disposition of the Swedish troops even in this unhappy engagement; be so good, then, as to tell me the truth, for which I have as great a regard as I have for your glory.

I expect, with extreme impatience, the other instructions with which you shall be pleased to honor me. Allow me to ask your opinion of the march of Charles XII into the Ukraine, of his retreat into Turkey, and of the death of Patkul. You can easily dictate many things to a secretary, which will serve to throw light upon several truths,—a favor for which the public will acknowledge themselves greatly obliged to you. You are bound in duty, sir, to communicate knowledge to mankind, in return for the admiration which they so justly entertain of your merit. I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, and with the most sincere wishes for the preservation of a life, of which you have frequently been so prodigal,

Sir, your excellency's most humble
and most obedient servant,
V.

P. S. Just as I have finished my letter, I am informed that a French translation of the history of Charles XII, written in Swedish by M. Norberg, has been printed at the Hague. This will be a new pallet,[1] in which I shall dip the pencils with which I must retouch my picture.

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[1] This pallet could not answer the purpose. It is well known that the *History of Charles XII* by Norberg is no more, to the year 1709, than a confused collection of facts ill related; and, from 1709, than a copy of the history composed by Voltaire.—*Editors of Kehl.*

LETTER TO M. NORBERG,

CHAPLAIN TO CHARLES XII, KING OF SWEDEN, AND AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF THAT MONARCH. 1744.

PERMIT me, sir, after having taken the trouble to read that part of your history of Charles XII which is already published, to address to you some just complaints, both with regard to your manner of treating that history, and the freedom which, in your preface, you presume to use with those who have treated it before you.

I love the truth; but the old proverb, "All truths ought not to be told," relates chiefly to insignificant truths. Be pleased to recollect that passage in the preface to the history of M. de Voltaire. "The history of a prince," says he, "is not all that he ever did, but only what he did worthy of being transmitted to posterity."

There are some readers, perhaps, who will be glad to see the catechism which Charles XII was taught, and will take great pleasure[1] in being informed that, in 1693, Doctor Peter Rudbeckius gave a doctor's bonnet to the masters of arts Aquinus, Samuel Virenius, Ennegius, Herlandus, Stuckius, and upon other personages, extremely respectable, no doubt, but who had very little concern in the battles, the triumphs, and defeats of your hero.

Perhaps it is a matter of great importance to Europe, to know that the chapel of the castle of Stockholm, which was burnt about fifty years ago, stood in the new aisle, on the north side; and that there were in it two pictures of the intendant Kloker, which are now in the church of St. Nicholas; that the seats were covered with blue on days of public service; that some of them were of oak, and others of walnut-tree;[2] and that, instead of large lustres, there were small flat candlesticks,

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[1] History of Charles XII, by Norberg, p. 9. Husson's edition.
[2] Ibid., p 21.

which did not fail to produce a very happy effect; that there were there to be seen four figures of plaster of Paris, and that the pavement was black and white.

We will further believe,[1] that it is a thing of great consequence to be well informed that there was no base gold in the canopy which served at the coronation of Charles XII; to know what were the dimensions of it; whether the church was hung with red or blue cloth, and what was the height of the benches All this may have its weight with those who want to acquire a thorough knowledge of the most minute concern of princes.

After the tedious detail of these mighty matters, you tell us at what hour Charles XII was crowned; but you do not tell us why he was crowned before the age prescribed by law; why the queen-mother was deprived of the regency; how the famous Piper gained the confidence of the king; what was the strength of Sweden at that time, what the number of its people, who were its allies, and what its government, its wants, and resources.

You have given us a part of the military journal of M. Adlerfeld; but a journal, sir, is no more a history than materials are a house. Allow me to tell you, a history does not consist in particularizing petty facts,—in producing manifestoes, replies, and rejoinders. This is not the manner in which Quintus Curtius composed the history of Alexander, or in which Livy and Tacitus wrote the Roman history. There are a thousand journalists; but hardly have we two or three modern historians. We could wish that those who prepare the colors would give them to some painter in order to form a picture.

You cannot be ignorant, sir, that M. de Voltaire had published this declaration, which your translator repeats:

"I love the truth, and have no other aim or interest than to know it. Those passages in my *History of Charles XII*, in which I shall find myself to have been mistaken, shall be altered. It is natural to think that Norberg, a Swede, and an eye-witness, should be better informed than I, who am a stran-

[1] Husson's edition, pp. 81, 82.

ger. I shall correct my history by his memoirs, and will do it with pleasure."[1]

You see, sir, with what politeness M. de Voltaire mentioned your name, and with what deference he expected your performance, though he had received memoirs for the compilation of his own from the hands of several ambassadors, with whom it would appear you had little connection, and even from the hands of more than one sovereign.

To this French politeness, sir, you reply in a manner that savors something of a Gothic taste.

You say, in your preface,[2] that the history published by M. de Voltaire is not worth the pains of translating; though, in fact, it has been translated into almost all the European languages, and has had eight editions at London, in an English dress. You there add very politely, that a Puffendorf would have treated him as he did Varillas, as an *arch-liar*.

In order to prove this charitable supposition, you take care to mark on the margin of your book all the capital errors into which he has fallen.

You particularly observe, that Major-general Stuart did not receive a slight wound in the shoulder, as the French author, after a German writer, rashly affirms, but only a pretty severe contusion. You cannot deny that M. de Voltaire has faithfully related the battle of Narva, which in his book at least forms an interesting description. You must certainly know, that he is the only writer who has dared to affirm that Charles XII fought the battle of Narva with no more than eight thousand men. All the other historians give him twenty thousand: they say what is probable; but M. de Voltaire is the first that has told the truth in this important article. Nevertheless, you call him an arch-liar, because he said that a suit of red-laced clothes was brought to General Liewen, at the siege of Thorn; and you magnify this enormous error, by positively asserting that the lace was not upon a red ground.

But what name will suit you, sir,—you who so lavishly be-

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[1] Husson's edition, 4to, p. 18.

[2] Ibid., p. 18.

stow, about matters of such mighty consequence, the genteel appellation of arch liar, not only upon a man who is extremely fond of the truth, but likewise upon all the other historians who have written the history of Charles XII;—what name, sir, will suit you, after the copy you give of the Grand Seignior's letter to that monarch? Here follows the beginning of the letter:

"We, Sultan Pasha, to King Charles XII, by the grace of God king of Sweden and of the Goths, health,"[1] etc.

How could you, sir, who have been among the Turks, and who seem to have learned from them not to be very nice in the choice of your words,—how could you be ignorant of their style? What Turkish emperor ever designated himself *Sultan Pasha?* What letter of the Divan ever began in this manner? What prince ever wrote that he would send plenipotentiaries, the first opportunity, in order to learn the particulars of a battle? what letter of the Grand Seignior ever concluded with this expression, *To the protection of God?* In fine, when did you ever see an express from Constantinople dated in the year of the creation, and not in that of the Hegira? The iman of the august Sultan, who shall write the history of that great emperor and his sublime viziers, may well give you many opprobrious appellations, if the Turkish politeness admits of such.

Does it then become you, sir, after the production of such a piece as this, which would offend that same Baron Puffendorf, to exclaim against a lie about a red coat?

Besides, are you a zealous advocate for the truth, when you conceal the cruelties exercised by the Chamber of Liquidations under Charles XI, when, in speaking of Patkul, you pretend to forget that he defended the rights of the Livonians, who had committed them to his charge;—of those same Livonians who now live happily under the mild government of the illustrious Semiramis of the North? This, sir, is not barely to betray the truth; it is to betray the cause of mankind; it is to fail in

[1] Husson's edition, p. 137.

your duty to your illustrious country, which is an enemy to oppression.

Cease then, in your compilation, to bestow your Vandalic and Gothic epithets upon those who write history: cease to assume to yourself a right of employing that same barbarous pedantry which you impute to Puffendorf.

Do you know, sir, that Puffendorf is an author sometimes as incorrect as he is fashionable? Do you know that he is read, because he is the only one of the kind that was tolerable in his time? Do you know that those whom you call arch-liars, would blush if they did not understand the history of the world better than your Puffendorf? Do you know that M. de la Martinière corrected more than a thousand errors in the last edition of that book?

Let us open this book at a venture, which is so universally known. I light upon the article of the Popes. He says, in speaking of Julius II, "that he left behind him, as well as Alexander VI, a bad name." Nevertheless the Italians revere the memory of Julius II. They consider him as a great man, who, after having presided in four conclaves, and commanded armies, pursued, even to his grave, the glorious scheme he had formed of chasing the barbarians from Italy. He was a lover of the arts; he laid the foundation of that church which is the wonder of the universe; he encouraged painting, sculpture, and architecture, and, at the same time, he rekindled the extinguished valor of the Romans. The Italians despise, and with good reason too, the ridiculous manner in which the greatest part of foreigners write the history of the Popes. We ought to be capable of distinguishing the pontiff from the sovereign: we ought to be capable, though born at Stockholm, to entertain a high opinion of the Popes: we ought to remember the saying of the great Cosmo de' Medici, viz.: "That kingdoms are not governed with paternosters." In a word, a historian should be a man of no country, and of no party.

If we again open Baron Puffendorf's book, we shall find it asserted, in the article on Mary, queen of England, daughter of

Henry VIII, "that she could not be recognized as his legitimate daughter without the authority of the Pope." What a crowd of errors in these few words! She had been recognized by the parliament: and besides, what need had she of the assistance of Rome, in order to confirm her legitimacy, since it never had been either the interest or the intention of the Romish Church to annul the marriage of her mother.

In reading the article of Charles V, I find that, before the year 1516, Charles had always in his eye his famous maxim, *ne plus ultra:* but he was then but fifteen years of age; and that motto was not composed till a long time after.

Shall we, on account of these errors, pronounce Puffendorf to be an arch-liar? no: we will rather acknowledge that, in such an extensive work, a few mistakes are excusable; and we would entreat you, sir, to be more accurate than he is, more thoroughly acquainted than you yet seem to be with the style of the Turks, more polite with the French, and, in a word, to be more just and judicious in the choice of the facts you relate.

Among the many advantages with which the art of printing has been attended, this is one inconvenience, that crowds of scandalous pamphlets are published, to the disgrace of genius and of good manners. Wherever there are many writers there are many libels: these wretched performances, frequently produced in France, pass current in the North, in the same manner as our bad wines are sold there for Burgundy and Champagne. The former are read, and the latter are drank, often with the same want of taste; but men of real knowledge will always despise what France rejects.

You quote, sir, some pieces which are altogether unworthy the notice of the chaplain of Charles XII. Your translator, Walmoth, has honestly informed us, in his notes, that some of these are such wretched and obscure satires, that any gentleman would be ashamed to cite them.

The duties of an historian are many and various. Allow me to remind you of two of them, which are of some consequence; these are, never to rail, and never to be tedious. For

the first I can easily excuse you, because your book will be the less read; but for the last I cannot possibly forgive you, because I have been obliged to read it myself. In other respects, sir, I am, with all possible regard, your most humble and most obedient servant.[1]

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[1] Norberg, or Nordberg (George), born at Stockholm, 1677, followed Charles XII. into Poland, Saxony, and Russia, as almoner to the Swedish army. In 1707, he was made chaplain to the king. Queen Ulrica Eleonora, after the death of Charles XII, commissioned Norberg to write his history under her own eyes. The manuscript was revised by a royal commission. The work was published at Stockholm in 1740, 2 vols. fol., and translated from the Swedish into French, and published at the Hague, "Histoire de Charles XII, par M. de Nordberg," 8 vols. 4to, 1742. . . . Norberg's book is authoritative, but very dull in style. He stupidly abused Voltaire, and got brilliantly abused in return.—*Ed.*

THE

HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.

BOOK I.

An abridgment of the History of Sweden to the reign of Charles XII.—The education of that prince, and an account of his enemies. Character of the Czar Peter Alexiovitch. Curious anecdotes relative to that prince and the Russian nation. Muscovy, Poland, and Denmark unite against Charles XII.

SWEDEN and Finland constitute a kingdom two hundred leagues broad, and three hundred long. This country reaches from the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, or thereabouts, to the seventieth. It lies under a very severe climate, which is hardly ever softened either by the return of spring or of autumn. The winter prevails there nine months in the year. The scorching heats of the summer succeed immediately to the excessive cold of the winter. The frost begins in the month of October, without any of those imperceptible gradations, which in other countries usher in the seasons, and render the change more agreeable. Nature, in return, has given to this cold climate a clear sky and a pure air. The almost constant heat of the summer produces flowers and fruits in a very short time. The long nights of the winter are tempered by the evening and morning twilights, which last for a greater or less time, in proportion as the sun is nearer to, or farther removed from, Sweden; and the light of the moon, unobscured by clouds, and increased by the reflection of the snow that covers the ground, and frequently by the Aurora Borealis, makes it as convenient to travel in Sweden by night as by

day. For want of pasture, the cattle there are smaller than in the more southern parts of Europe; but the men are of a large stature, healthful from the purity of the air, and strong from the severity of the climate; they live to a great age, unless enfeebled by the immoderate use of wines and strong liquors, of which the northern nations seem to be the more fond, the less nature has indulged them with these commodities.

The Swedes are well made, strong, and active, and capable of enduring the greatest fatigue, want, and hunger. Born with a military genius and high spirit, they are more brave than industrious, having long neglected, and even at present but little cultivating, the arts of commerce, which alone can supply them with those productions in which their country is deficient. They say it was chiefly from Sweden, one part of which is still called Gothland, that those swarms of Goths issued forth, who like a deluge overran Europe, and wrested it from the Romans, who had usurped the dominion of that vast country, which they continued for the space of five hundred years to harass by their tyranny, and to civilize by their laws.

The northern countries were much more populous at that time than they are at present. Religion, by allowing the men a plurality of wives, gave them an opportunity of furnishing the State with more subjects. The women themselves knew no reproach but that of sterility or idleness; and being as strong and as laborious as the men, they bore children faster and for a longer time. Sweden, however, with that part of Finland which it still retains, does not contain above four millions of inhabitants. The soil is poor and barren; Scania [Schonen or Skåne] is the only province that bears wheat. The current coin of the kingdom does not exceed nine millions of livres. The public bank, which is the oldest in Europe, was at first established from mere necessity; the copper and iron, in which their payments were formerly made, being too heavy to be transported.

Sweden preserved its freedom without interruption to the middle of the fourteenth century. During that long period,

the form of government was more than once altered; but all these alterations were in favor of liberty. The first magistrate was invested with the name of king, a title which, in different countries, is attended with very different degrees of power. In France and Spain it signifies an absolute monarch: in Poland, Sweden, and England, it means the first man of the republic. This king could do nothing without the senate; and the senate depended upon the States-General, which were frequently assembled. The representatives of the nation, in these grand assemblies, were the gentry, the bishops, and the deputies of the towns; and in process of time, the very peasants, a class of people unjustly despised in other places, and subject to slavery in almost all the northern countries, were admitted to a share in the administration.

About the year 1492, this nation, so jealous of its liberty, and which still piques itself on having conquered Rome about thirteen hundred years ago, was subjected to the yoke by a woman, and by a people less powerful than the Swedes.

Margaret of Valdemar, the Semiramis of the North, and queen of Denmark and Norway, subdued Sweden by force and stratagem, and united these three extensive kingdoms into one mighty monarchy. After her death, Sweden was rent by civil wars; it alternately threw off and submitted to the Danish yoke; was sometimes governed by kings, and sometimes by administrators. About the year 1520, this unhappy kingdom was horribly harassed by two tyrants: the one was Christiern II, king of Denmark, a monster whose character was entirely composed of vices, without the least ingredient of virtue: the other an archbishop of Upsala, and primate of the kingdom, as barbarous as the former. These two, by mutual agreement, caused the consuls and the magistrates of Stockholm, together with ninety-four senators, to be seized in one day, and to be executed by the hand of the common hangman, under the frivolous pretence that they were excommunicated by the Pope, for having dared to defend the rights of the State against the encroachments of the archbishop.

While these two men, unanimous in their oppressive measures, and disagreeing only about the division of the spoil, domineered over Sweden with all the tyranny of the most absolute despotism, and all the cruelty of the most implacable revenge, a new and unexpected event gave a sudden turn to the state of affairs in the North.

Gustavus Vasa, a young man, sprung from the ancient kings of Sweden, arose from the forests of Dalecarlia, where he had long lain concealed, and came to deliver his country from bondage. He was one of those great souls whom nature so seldom produces, and who are born with all the qualifications necessary to form the accomplished monarch. His handsome and stately person, and his noble and majestic air, gained him followers at first sight. His eloquence, recommended by an engaging manner, was the more persuasive the less it was artful. His enterprising genius formed those projects which, though to the vulgar they may appear rash, are considered only as bold in the eyes of great men, and which his courage and perseverance enabled him to accomplish. Brave with circumspection, and mild and gentle in a fierce and cruel age, he was as virtuous as it is possible for the leader of a party to be.

Gustavus Vasa had been the hostage of Christiern, and had been detained a prisoner contrary to the law of nations. Having found means to escape from prison, he had dressed himself in the habit of a peasant, and in that disguise he wandered about in the mountains and woods of Dalecarlia, where he was reduced to the necessity of working in the copper-mines, at once to procure a livelihood, and to conceal himself from his enemies. Buried as he was in these subterraneous caverns, he had the boldness to form the design of dethroning the tyrant. With this view he discovered himself to the peasants, who regarded him as one of those superior beings to whom the common herd of mankind are naturally inclined to submit. These savage boors he soon improved into hardy and warlike soldiers. He attacked Christiern and the archbishop, beat them in several encounters, banished them both from Sweden,

and, at last, was justly chosen by the States king of that country of which he had been the deliverer.

Hardly was he established on the throne, when he undertook an enterprise still more difficult than his conquests. The real tyrants of the State were the bishops, who, having engrossed almost all the riches of Sweden, employed their ill-gotten wealth in oppressing the subjects, and in making war upon the king. This power was the more formidable, as, in the opinion of the ignorant populace, it was held to be sacred. Gustavus punished the Catholic religion for the crimes of its ministers; and, in less than two years, introduced Lutheranism into Sweden, rather by the arts of policy than by the influence of authority. Having thus conquered the kingdoms, as he was wont to say, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned a happy and an absolute monarch to the age of seventy, and then died full of glory, leaving his family and religion in quiet possession of the throne.

One of his descendants was that Gustavus Adolphus, who is commonly called the *Great Gustavus.* He conquered Ingria [Ingermannland], Livonia, Bremen, Verden, Wismar, and Pomerania, not to mention above a hundred places in Germany, which, after his death, were yielded up by the Swedes. He shook the throne of Ferdinand II, and protected the Lutherans in Germany, an attempt in which he was secretly assisted by the Pope himself, who dreaded the power of the emperor much more than the prevalence of heresy. He it was that by his victories effectually contributed to humble the house of Austria; though the glory of that enterprise is usually ascribed to Cardinal Richelieu, who well knew how to procure himself the reputation of those great actions which Gustavus was contented with simply performing. He was just upon the point of extending the war beyond the Danube, and perhaps of dethroning the emperor, when he was killed, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, at the battle of Lützen, which he gained over Wallenstein, carrying along with him to his grave the name of *Great*, the lamentations of the North, and the esteem of his enemies.

His daughter Christina, a lady of an extraordinary genius, was much fonder of conversing with men of learning, than of reigning over a people whose knowledge was entirely confined to the art of war. She became as famous for quitting the throne as her ancestors had been for obtaining or securing it. The Protestants have loaded her memory with many injurious aspersions, as if it were impossible for a person to be possessed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; and the papists have piqued themselves too much on the conversion of a woman who had nothing to recommend her but her taste for philosophy. She retired to Rome, where she passed the rest of her days in the midst of those arts of which she was so passionately fond, and for the sake of which she had renounced a crown at twenty-seven years of age.

Before her abdication, she prevailed upon the States of Sweden to elect her cousin, Charles Gustavus X, son of the Count Palatine, and Duke of Deux-Ponts, as her successor. This prince added new conquests to those of Gustavus Adolphus. He presently carried his arms into Poland, where he gained the famous battle of Warsaw, which lasted for three days. He waged a long and successful war with the Danes; besieged them in their capital; reunited Scania to Sweden; and confirmed the Duke of Holstein in the possession of Sleswick, at least for a time. At last, having met with a reverse of fortune, and concluded a peace with his enemies, he turned his ambition against his subjects, and formed the design of establishing a despotic government in Sweden. But, like the great Gustavus, he died in the thirty-seventh year of his age, without being able to finish his project, the full accomplishment of which was reserved for his son, Charles XI.

Charles XI was a warrior, like all his ancestors, and more despotic than any of them. He abolished the authority of the senate, which was declared to be the senate of the king, and not of the kingdom. He was prudent, vigilant, indefatigable; qualities that must certainly have secured him the love of his subjects, had not his despotic measures been more adapted to excite their fear than to gain their affections.

In 1680, he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter to Frederick III, king of Denmark, a princess eminent for her virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband was pleased to repose in her. Of this marriage, on the 27th of June, 1682, was born King Charles XII, the most extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. In him were united all the great qualities of his ancestors; nor had he any other fault or failing, but that he possessed all these virtues in too high a degree. This is the prince whose history we now purpose to write, and concerning whose person and actions we shall relate nothing but what is founded upon the best authority.

The first book which was put into his hands was the work of Samuel Puffendorf, that from thence he might acquire an early knowledge of his own dominions, and of those of his neighbors. He next learned the German language, which he continued to speak for the future, with the same fluency as his mother-tongue. At seven years of age he could manage a horse; and the violent exercises in which he delighted, and which discovered his martial disposition, soon procured him a vigorous constitution, capable of supporting the incredible fatigues which his natural inclination always prompted him to undergo.

Though gentle in his infancy, he betrayed an inflexible obstinacy. The only way to influence him was to awaken his sense of honor; by mentioning the word glory, you might have obtained any thing from him. He had a great aversion to the Latin tongue; but as soon as he heard that the kings of Poland and Denmark understood it, he learned it with great expedition, and retained so much of it as to be able to speak it all the rest of his life. The same means were employed to engage him to learn the French; but he could never be persuaded to make use of that tongue, not even with the French ambassadors themselves, who understood no other.

As soon as he had acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Latin, his teacher made him translate Quintus Curtius; a book for which he conceived a great liking, rather on account of the

subject than the style. The person who explained this author to him having asked him what he thought of Alexander, "I think," said the prince, "I could wish to be like him." "But," resumed the preceptor, "he only lived two-and-thirty years." "Ah!" he replied, "and is not that enough when one has conquered kingdoms?" The courtiers did not fail to carry these answers to the king his father, who would often cry out. "This child will excel me, and will even go beyond the great Gustavus." One day he happened to be diverting himself in the royal apartment, in viewing two plans: the one of a town in Hungary, which the Turks had taken from the emperor; the other of Riga, the capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes about a century before. Under the plan of the town of Hungary were written these words, taken from the book of Job: "The Lord hath given it to me, and the Lord hath taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord." The young prince having read this inscription, immediately took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga: "The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil shall not take it from me."[1] Thus, in the most indifferent actions of his childhood, his unconquerable spirit would frequently show some traces of those heroic qualities which characterize great souls, and which plainly indicated what sort of a man he would one day prove to be.

He was but eleven years of age when he lost his mother, who expired on the fifth of August, 1693. The disease of which she died was supposed to be owing to the bad usage she had received from her husband, and to her own endeavors to conceal her vexation. Charles XI had, by means of a certain court of justice, which was called the Chamber of Liquidations, and erected by his sole authority, deprived a great number of his subjects of their wealth. Crowds of citizens, ruined by this chamber,—nobility, merchants, farmers, widows, and orphans,—filled the streets of Stockholm, and daily repaired

[1] This anecdote I give from the information of two French ambassadors, who resided at the court of Sweden.

to the gate of the palace to pour forth their unavailing complaints. The queen succored these unhappy people as much as lay in her power; she gave them her money, her jewels, her furniture, and even her clothes; and when she had no more to give them, with tears in her eyes, she threw herself at her husband's feet, beseeching him to have pity on his wretched subjects. The king gravely answered her: "Madam, we took you to bring us children, not to give us advice." And from that time he treated her with a severity that is said to have shortened her days.

He died four years after her, on the fifteenth of April, 1697, in the fifty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign, at a time when the Empire, Spain, and Holland, on the one side, and France on the other, had referred the decision of their quarrels to his arbitration, and when he had already concerted the terms of accommodation between these different powers.

He left to his son, who was then fifteen years of age, a throne well established and respected abroad; subjects poor, but valiant and loyal; together with a treasury in good order, and managed by able ministers.

Charles XII, at his accession to the throne, found himself the absolute and undisturbed master, not only of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wismar, Viborg, the Islands of Rügen and Oesel, and the finest part of Pomerania, together with the duchy of Bremen and Verden,—all of them the conquests of his ancestors, secured to the crown by long possession, and by the solemn treaties of Munster and Oliva, and supported by the terror of the Swedish arms. The peace of Ryswyk, which was begun under the auspices of the father, being fully concluded under those of the son, he found himself the mediator of Europe from the first moment of his reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen; but Charles XI, who was entirely absolute, put off, by his last will, the majority of his son to the age of eighteen. In this he favored the ambitious views of his mother,

Edwiga Eleonora of Holstein, dowager of Charles X, who was appointed by the king her son, guardian to the young king her grandson, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

The regent had a share in the management of public affairs during the reign of her son. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was greater than her abilities, prompted her to entertain the pleasing hopes of possessing authority for a long time under the king her grandson. She kept him at as great a distance as possible from all concern with the affairs of state. The young prince passed his time either in hunting or in reviewing his troops, and would even sometimes exercise with them; which amusement seemed only to be the natural effect of his youthful vivacity. He never betrayed any dissatisfaction sufficient to alarm the regent, who flattered herself that the dissipation of mind occasioned by these diversions would render him incapable of application, and leave her in possession of the supreme power for a considerable time.

One day in the month of November, and in the same year in which his father died, when he had been taking a review of several regiments, and Piper the counsellor was standing by him, he seemed to be absorbed in a profound reverie. "May I take the liberty," said Piper to him, "of asking your majesty what you are thinking of so seriously?" "I am thinking," replied the prince, "that I am capable of commanding those brave fellows; and I don't choose that either they or I should receive orders from a woman." Piper immediately seized this opportunity of making his fortune; but, conscious that his own interest was not sufficient for the execution of such a dangerous enterprise as the removal of the queen from the regency, and the hastening of the king's majority, he proposed the affair to Count Axel Sparr, a man of a daring spirit, and fond of popularity. Him he cajoled with the hopes of being the king's confidant. The count readily swallowed the bait, and undertook the management of the whole matter, while all his labors only tended to promote the interest of Piper. The

counsellors of the regency were soon drawn into the scheme, and forthwith proceeded to the execution of it, in order to recommend themselves the more effectually to the king.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who little expected such a declaration. The counsellors of the regency laid the matter before the States-General, who were then assembled, and who were all unanimous in approving the proposal. The point was carried with a rapidity that nothing could withstand; so that Charles XII had only to signify his desire of reigning, and, in three days, the States bestowed the government upon him. The queen's power and credit fell in an instant. She afterwards led a private life, which was more suitable to her age, though less agreeable to her humor. The king was crowned on the twenty-fourth of December following. He made his entry into Stockholm on a sorrel horse shod with silver, having a sceptre in his hand and a crown upon his head, amid the acclamations of a whole people, passionately fond of every novelty, and always conceiving great hopes from the reign of a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the Archbishop of Upsala. This is almost the only privilege that remains to him of the great number that were claimed by his predecessors. After having anointed the prince, according to custom, he held the crown in his hand, in order to put it upon his head: Charles snatched it from him and crowned himself, regarding the poor prelate all the while with a stern look. The people, who are always dazzled by every thing that has an air of grandeur and magnificence, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had groaned most severely under the tyranny of the father, were foolish enough to commend the son for this instance of arrogance, which was a sure pledge of their future slavery.

As soon as Charles was master of the kingdom he made Piper his chief confidant, intrusting him at the same time with the management of public affairs, and giving him all the power of a prime minister, without the odium of the name. A few days after he created him a count, which is a dignity of

great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title that may be assumed without any manner of importance, as with us in France.

The beginning of the king's reign gave no very favorable idea of his character. It was imagined that he had been more ambitious of obtaining the supreme power than worthy of possessing it. True it is, he had no dangerous passion; but his conduct discovered nothing but the sallies of youth and the freaks of obstinacy. He seemed to be equally proud and lazy. The ambassadors who resided at his court took him even for a person of mean capacity, and represented him as such to their respective masters.[1] The Swedes entertained the same opinion of him: nobody knew his real character: he did not even know it himself, until the storm that suddenly arose in the North gave him an opportunity of displaying his great talents, which had hitherto lain concealed.

Three powerful princes, taking the advantage of his youth, conspired his ruin almost at the same time. The first was his own cousin, Frederick IV, king of Denmark: the second, Augustus, elector of Saxony and king of Poland; Peter the Great, czar of Muscovy, was the third, and most dangerous. It will be necessary to unfold the origin of these wars, which produced such great events. Let us begin with Denmark.

Of the two sisters of Charles XII, the eldest was married to the Duke of Holstein, a young prince of an undaunted spirit and of a gentle disposition. The duke, oppressed by the King of Denmark, repaired to Stockholm with his spouse, and throwing himself into the arms of the king, earnestly implored his assistance. This he hoped to obtain, as Charles was not only his brother-in-law, but was likewise the sovereign of a people who bore an irreconcilable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient house of Holstein, sunk in that of Oldenburg had been advanced by election to the throne of Denmark in 1449. All the kingdoms of the North were at that time elective; but the kingdom of Denmark soon after became heredi-

[1] This is confirmed by original letters.

tary. One of its kings, called Christiern III, had such a tender affection for his brother Adolphus, or, at least, such a regard for his interest, as is seldom to be met with among princes. He was desirous of investing him with sovereign power, and yet he could not dismember his own dominions. He therefore divided with him the duchies of Holstein-Gottorp and Sleswick, by an odd kind of agreement, the substance of which was, that the descendants of Adolphus should ever after govern Holstein in conjunction with the kings of Denmark; that those two duchies should belong to both in common; and that the King of Denmark should be able to do nothing in Holstein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. A union so strange, of which, however, we have had within these few years a similar instance in the same family, was, for nearly eighty years, the source of perpetual disputes between the crown of Denmark and the house of Holstein-Gottorp,—the kings always endeavoring to oppress the dukes, and the dukes to render themselves independent. A struggle of this nature had cost the last duke his liberty and sovereignty, both which, however, he recovered at the conferences of Altona in 1689, by the interposition of Sweden, England, and Holland, who became guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But as a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a giving way to necessity, till such times as the stronger shall be able to crush the weaker, the contest was revived with greater virulence than ever between the new King of Denmark and the young duke. And while the duke was at Stockholm, the Danes had already committed some acts of hostility in the country of Holstein, and had entered into a secret agreement with the King of Poland, to attack the King of Sweden himself.

Frederick Augustus, elector of Saxony, whom neither the eloquence nor negotiations of the Abbé de Polignac, nor the great qualities of the Prince of Conti, his competitor for the throne, had been able to prevent from being chosen king of Poland about two years before, was a prince still less remarkable for his incredible strength of body than for his bravery and gallantry of soul. His court, next to that of Louis XIV,

was the most splendid of any in Europe. Never was prince more generous or munificent, or bestowed his favors with a better grace. He had purchased the votes of one half of the Polish nobility, and overawed the other by the approach of a Saxon army. As he thought he should have need of his troops in order to establish himself the more firmly on the throne, he wanted a pretext for retaining them in Poland; and he therefore resolved to employ them in attacking the King of Sweden, which he did on the following occasion.

Livonia, the most beautiful and the most fruitful province of the North, belonged formerly to the knights of the Teutonic Order. The Russians, the Poles, and the Swedes had severally disputed the possession of it. The Swedes had carried it from all the rest about a hundred years before; and it had been formerly ceded to them by the peace of Oliva.

The late king, Charles XI, amid his severities to his subjects in general, had not spared the Livonians. He had stripped them of their privileges, and of part of their estates. Patkul, who unhappily has since become famous for his tragical death, was deputed by the nobility of Livonia to carry to the throne the complaints of the province. He addressed his master in a speech, respectful indeed, but bold, and full of that manly eloquence, which calamity, when joined to courage, never fails to inspire. But kings too frequently consider these public addresses as no more than vain ceremonies, which it is customary to suffer, without paying them any regard. Charles XI, however, who could play the hypocrite extremely well, when he was not hurried away by the violence of his passion, gently struck Patkul on the shoulder and said to him: "You have spoken for your country like a brave man, and I esteem you for it; go on." Notwithstanding, in a few days after, he caused him to be declared guilty of high treason, and as such to be condemned to death. Patkul, who had hid himself, made his escape, and carried his resentment with him to Poland, where he was afterwards admitted into the presence of King Augustus. Charles XI was now dead; but Patkul's sentence was still in force, and his indignation still unabated.

He represented to his Polish majesty the facility of conquering Livonia, the people of which were mad with despair, and ready to throw off the Swedish yoke; while the king was a child and unable to make any resistance. These representations were well received by a prince, who already flattered himself with the agreeable hopes of this important conquest. Augustus had engaged at his coronation to exert his most vigorous efforts, in order to recover the provinces which Poland had lost; and he imagined that, by making an irruption into Livonia, he should at once please the people, and establish his own power; in both which particulars, however promising of success, he at last found himself fatally disappointed. Every thing was soon got ready for a sudden invasion, which he resolved to make without having recourse to the vain formalities of declarations of war and manifestoes. The storm thickened, at the same time, on the side of Muscovy. The monarch who governed that kingdom merits the attention of posterity.

Peter Alexiovitch, czar of Russia, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the reduction of Azof, which opened to him the dominion of the Black Sea. But it was by actions still more glorious than even his victories, that he aspired to the name of *Great*. Muscovy, or Russia, comprehends the northern parts of Asia and of Europe, and from the frontiers of China extends, for the space of fifteen hundred leagues, to the borders of Poland and Sweden. This immense country, however, was hardly known to Europe before the time of the czar Peter. The Muscovites were less civilized than the Mexicans, when discovered by Cortez: born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they were sunk into a state of the most profound ignorance, into a total want of all the arts and sciences, and into such an insensibility of that want, as effectually suppressed every exertion of industry. An ancient law, which they held to be sacred, forbade them, under pain of death, to leave their native country without permission of their patriarch. This law, made with a view to preclude them from all opportunities of becoming sensible of their slavery, was very

acceptable to a people, who, in the depth of their misery and ignorance, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The era of the Muscovites began at the creation of the world: they reckoned up 7207 years to the beginning of the last century, without being able to assign any reason for this computation. The first day of their year answered to the thirteenth of our month of November. The reason they allege for this regulation is, that it is probable that God created the world in autumn, the season when the fruits of the earth are in their full maturity. Thus, the only appearance of knowledge which they had was founded upon gross errors; not one of them ever dreamed that the autumn of Muscovy might possibly be the spring of another country, situated in an opposite climate. Nor is it long since the people at Moscow were going to burn the secretary of a Persian ambassador, who had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures, but in all their computations made use of little beads strung upon brass wires. They had no other manner of reckoning in their counting-houses, not even in the treasury of the czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the great Church, intermixed with many superstitious rites, to which they are more strongly attached, in proportion as they are the more ridiculous, and their burden the more intolerable. Few Muscovites would venture to eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is painted in the form of a dove. They regularly observed four lents in the year; and during those times of abstinence, they never presumed to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the czar and the patriarch. The authority of the last was as unbounded as the people's ignorance. He pronounced sentences of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any possibility of an appeal from his tribunal. Twice a year he made a solemn procession on horseback, attended by all his clergy in order. The czar on foot held the bridle of his horse, and the people prostrated themselves before him in the streets, as the Tartars do before their Grand Lama. Con-

fession was in use among them, but it was only in cases of the greatest crimes. In these absolution was necessary, but not repentance. They thought themselves pure in the sight of God, as soon as they received the benediction of their papas. Thus they passed, without remorse, from confession to theft and murder; and what among other Christians is a restraint from vice, with them was an encouragement to wickedness. On a fast-day they would not even venture to drink milk; but on a festival, masters of families, priests, married women and maids, would not scruple to intoxicate themselves with brandy. However, there were religious disputes among them as well as in other countries; but their greatest controversy was, whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or with three. One Jacob Nursuff, in the preceding reign, had raised a sedition in Astrakhan about this very quarrel. There were even some fanatics among them, as there are in those civilized nations where every one is a theologian; and Peter, who always carried justice to the extreme of cruelty, caused some of these wretched creatures, who were called *vosko-jesuits*, to be committed to the flames.

The czar, in his vast dominions, had many other subjects who were not Christians. The Tartars, inhabiting the western coasts of the Caspian Sea and the Palus Mæotis,[1] were Mahometans; the Siberians, the Ostiacks, and the Samoyedes, who lie towards the Frozen Sea, were savages, some of whom were idolaters, and others had not the least knowledge of a God; and yet the Swedes, who were sent prisoners among them, were better pleased with their manners than with those of the ancient Muscovites.

Peter Alexiovitch had received an education that tended still more to increase the barbarity of this part of the world. His natural disposition led him to caress strangers, before he knew what advantages he might derive from their acquaintance. Lefort, as has been already observed, was the first instrument he employed to change the face of affairs in Mus-

[1] Sea of Azof.

covy. His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had hitherto checked but not destroyed, broke forth all of a sudden He resolved to be a man, to command men, and to create a new nation. Many princes before him had renounced crowns, wearied out with the intolerable load of public affairs; but no man had ever divested himself of the royal character, in order to learn the art of governing better: this was a stretch of heroism which was reserved for Peter the Great alone.

He left Russia in 1698, having reigned as yet but two years, and went to Holland, disguised under a common name, as if he had been a menial servant of that same Lefort, whom he sent in quality of ambassador-extraordinary to the States-General. As soon as he arrived at Amsterdam, he enrolled his name among the shipwrights of the admirality of the Indies, and wrought in the yard like the other mechanics. At his leisure hours he learned such parts of the mathematics as are useful to a prince,—fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmen's shops, and examined all their manufactures: nothing could escape his observation. From thence he passed over into England, where having perfected himself in the art of ship-building, he returned to Holland, carefully observing every thing that might turn to the advantage of his country. At last, after two years of travel and labor, to which no man but himself would have willingly submitted, he again made his appearance in Russia, with all the arts of Europe in his train. Artists of every kind followed him in abundance. Then were seen, for the first time, large Russian ships in the Baltic, and on the Black Sea and the ocean. Stately buildings, of a regular architecture, were raised among the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. The cities were brought under a regular police. The dress and customs of the people were gradually changed, though not without some difficulty; and the Muscovites learned by degrees the true nature of a social state. Even their superstitious rites were abolished; the dignity of the patriarch was suppressed; and the czar declared himself the head of the Church. This last enter-

prise, which would have cost a prince less absolute than Peter both his throne and his life, succeeded almost without opposition, and insured to him the success of all his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and a barbarous clergy, he ventured to make a trial of instructing them, though, by that means, he ran the risk of rendering them formidable; but he was too conscious of his own power to entertain any apprehension from that quarter. He caused philosophy and theology to be taught in the few monasteries that still remained. True it is, this theology still savors of that barbarous period in which Peter civilized his people. A gentleman of undoubted veracity assured me, that he was present at a public disputation, where the point of controversy was, whether the practice of smoking tobacco was a sin? The respondent alleged, that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke, because the holy Scripture saith, "That which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth a man, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

The monks were not satisfied with this reformation. Hardly had the czar erected his printing-houses, when these pious drones made use of them to publish declamations against their sovereign. One of them affirmed in print, that Peter was Antichrist; and his arguments were, that he deprived the living of their beards, and allowed the dead to be dissected in his academy. But another monk, who had a mind to make his fortune, refuted this book, and proved that Peter could not be Antichrist, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. The libeller was broken upon the wheel, and the author of the refutation was made Bishop of Riazan.

The reformer of Muscovy enacted a very wholesome law, the want of which reflects disgrace upon many civilized nations. By this law, no man engaged in the service of the State, no citizen established in trade, and especially no minor, was allowed to retire into a convent.

Peter knew of what infinite consequences it was to prevent useful subjects from consecrating themselves to idleness, and

to hinder young people from disposing of their liberty, at an age when they are incapable of disposing of the least part of their patrimony. This law, however, so plainly calculated for the general interest of mankind, is daily eluded by the industry of the monks; as if they, forsooth, were gainers by peopling their convents at the expense of their country.

The czar not only subjected the Church to the State, after the example of the Turkish emperors, but, what was a more masterly stroke of policy, he dissolved a militia of much the same nature with that of the janizaries: and what the sultans had attempted in vain, he accomplished in a short time: he disbanded the Russian janizaries, who were called Strelitz, and who kept the czars in subjection. These troops, more formidable to their masters than to their neighbors, consisted of about thirty thousand foot, one half of which remained at Moscow, while the other was stationed upon the frontiers. The pay of a Strelitz was no more than four roubles a year; but this deficiency was amply compensated by privileges and extortions. Peter at first formed a company of foreigners, among whom he enrolled his own name, and did not think it below him to begin the service in the character of a drummer, and to perform the duties of that mean office; so much did the nation stand in need of examples! By degrees he became an officer. He gradually raised new regiments; and, at last, finding himself master of a well-disciplined army, he broke the Strelitz, who durst not disobey.

The cavalry were nearly the same with that of Poland, or France, when this last kingdom was no more than an assemblage of fiefs. The Russian gentlemen were mounted at their own expense, and fought without discipline, and sometimes without any other arms than a sabre or a bow, incapable of obeying, and consequently of conquering.

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by the example he set them, and by the punishments he inflicted; for he served in the quality of a soldier and subaltern officer, and as czar he severely punished the Boyards, that is, the gentlemen, who pretended that it was the privilege of their order not to

serve but by their own consent. He established a regular body to serve the artillery, and took five hundred bells from the churches to found cannon. In the year 1714 he had thirteen thousand brass cannon. He likewise formed some troops of dragoons, a kind of militia very suitable to the genius of the Muscovites, and to the size of their horses, which are small. In 1738 the Russians had thirty regiments of dragoons, consisting of a thousand men each, and well accoutered.

He likewise established the Russian hussars; and had even a school of engineers, in a country where, before his time, no one understood the elements of geometry.

He was himself a good engineer; but his chief excellence lay in his knowledge of naval affairs: he was an able sea-captain, a skilful pilot, a good sailor, an expert shipwright, and his knowledge of these arts was the more meritorious, as he was born with a great dread of the water. In his youth he could not pass over a bridge without trembling: on all these occasions he caused the wooden windows of his coach to be shut; but of this constitutional weakness he soon got the better by his courage and resolution.

He caused a beautiful harbor to be built at the mouth of the Don, near Azof, in which he proposed to keep a number of galleys; and some time after, thinking that these vessels, so long, light, and flat, would probably succeed in the Baltic, he had upwards of three hundred of them built at his favorite city of Petersburg. He showed his subjects the method of building ships with fir only, and taught them the art of navigation. He had even learned surgery, and, in a case of necessity, has been known to tap a dropsical person. He was well versed in mechanics, and instructed the artists.

Indeed, the revenue of the czar, when compared to the immense extent of his dominions, was very inconsiderable. It never amounted to four-and-twenty millions of our money, reckoning the mark at about fifty livres, as we do to-day, though perhaps we may do otherwise to-morrow. But a man may always be accounted rich who has it in his power to accomplish great undertakings. It is not the scarcity of

money that weakens a State; it is the want of hands, and o. able men.

Russia, notwithstanding the women are fruitful and the men robust, is far from being populous. Peter himself, in civilizing his dominions, unhappily contributed to their depopulation. Frequent levies in his wars, which were long unsuccessful; nations transported from the coasts of the Caspian Sea to those of the Baltic, destroyed by fatigue, or cut off by diseases; three fourths of the Muscovite children dying of the small-pox, which is more dangerous in those climates than in any other; in a word, the melancholy effects of a government savage for a long time, and even barbarous in its policy;—to all these causes it is owing, that in this country, comprehending so great a part of the continent, there are still vast deserts. Russia, at present, is supposed to contain five hundred thousand families of gentlemen; two hundred thousand lawyers; something more than five millions of citizens and peasants, who pay a sort of tax; six hundred thousand men who live in the provinces conquered from the Swedes: the Cossacks in the Ukraine, and the Tartars that are subject to Muscovy, do not exceed two millions:—in fine, it appears that, in this immense country, there are not above fourteen millions of men, that is, a little more than two thirds of the inhabitants of France.

While Peter was employed in changing the laws, the manners, the militia, and the very face of his country, he likewise resolved to increase his greatness by encouraging commerce, which at once constitutes the riches of a particular State, and contributes to the interest of the world in general. He resolved to make Russia the centre of trade between Asia and Europe. He determined to join the Düna [Dvina], the Volga, and the Don, by cânals, of which he drew the plans; and thus to open a new passage from the Baltic to the Euxine and Caspian seas, and from these seas to the Northern Ocean.

The port of Archangel, frozen up for nine months in the year, and which could not be entered without making a long and dangerous circuit, he did not think sufficiently commo-

dious. From the year 1700, he had formed a design of building a fort upon the Baltic Sea that should become the magazine of the North, and of raising a city that should prove the capital of his empire.

He was already attempting to find out a northeast passage to China; and the manufactures of Pekin and Paris were designed to embellish his new city.

A road of seven hundred and fifty-four versts long, running through marshes that were to be drained, led from Moscow to his new city. Most of these projects were executed by his own hands; and the two empresses who have successively followed him have even improved upon his schemes, when they were practicable, and abandoned none but such as it was impossible to accomplish.

He was always travelling up and down his dominions, as much as his wars would allow him; but he travelled like a legislator and natural philosopher, examining nature everywhere, endeavoring to correct or perfect her; sounding with his own hands the depths of seas and rivers, repairing sluices, visiting docks, causing mines to be searched for, assaying metals, ordering accurate plans to be drawn, in the execution of which he himself assisted.

He built, upon a wild and uncultivated spot, the imperial city of Petersburg, which now contains sixty thousand houses, and is the residence of a splendid court, where all the refined pleasures are known and enjoyed. He built the harbor of Cronstadt, on the Neva, and Sainte-Croix, on the frontiers of Persia; erected forts in the Ukraine and Siberia; established offices of admiralty at Archangel, Petersburg, Astrakhan, and Azof; founded arsenals, and built and endowed hospitals. All his own houses were mean, and executed in a bad taste; but he spared no expenses in rendering the public buildings grand and magnificent.

The sciences, which in other countries have been the slow product of so many ages, were, by his care and industry, imported into Russia in full perfection. He established an academy on the plan of the famous societies of Paris and London.

The Delisles, the Bulfingers, the Hermanns, the Bernouillis, and the celebrated Wolf, a man who excelled in every branch of philosophy, were all invited and brought to Petersburg at a great expense. This academy still subsists; and the Muscovites, at length, have philosophers of their own nation.

He obliged the young nobility to travel for improvement, and to bring back into Russia the politeness of foreign countries: and I have seen some young Russians who were men of genius and of knowledge. Thus it was that a single man changed the face of the greatest empire in the universe. It is however a shocking reflection, that this reformer of mankind should have been deficient in that first of all virtues, the virtue of humanity. Brutality in his pleasures, ferocity in his manners, and cruelty in his punishments, sullied the lustre of so many virtues. He civilized his subjects, and yet remained himself a barbarian. He would sometimes, with his own hands, execute sentences of death upon the unhappy criminals; and, in the midst of a revel, would show his dexterity in cutting off heads.

There are princes in Africa, who, with their own hands, shed the blood of their subjects; but these kings are always detested as barbarians. The death of a son, whom he ought to have corrected, or at most disinherited, would render the memory of Peter the object of universal hatred, were it not that the great and many blessings he bestowed upon his subjects were almost sufficient to excuse his cruelty to his own offspring.

Such was the czar Peter; and his great projects were little more than in embryo when he joined the kings of Poland and Denmark against a child whom they all despised. The founder of the Russian empire was ambitious of being a conqueror; and such he thought he might easily become by the prosecution of a war, which, being entered into with so much prudence, could not fail, he imagined, of proving advantageous to his subjects. The art of war was a new art, which it was necessary to teach his people.

Besides, he wanted a port on the east side of the Baltic, to

facilitate the execution of all his schemes. He wanted the province of Ingria, which lies to the northeast of Livonia. The Swedes were in possession of it, and from them he resolved to take it by force. His predecessors had had claims upon Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia; and the present seemed a favorable opportunity for reviving these claims, which had lain buried for a hundred years, and had been cancelled by the sanction of treaties. He therefore made a league with the King of Poland, to wrest from young Charles XII all the territories that are bounded by the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Sea, Poland, and Muscovy

BOOK II.

A sudden and surprising change in the character of Charles XII. At eighteen years of age, he undertakes a war against Denmark, Poland, and Muscovy; finishes the Danish War in six weeks; with eight thousand Swedes defeats eighty thousand Russians; and then penetrates into Poland. A description of Poland, and its form of government. Charles gains several battles, and becomes master of Poland, where he prepares to nominate a king.

In this manner did three powerful sovereigns menace the infancy of Charles XII. The news of these preparations struck the Swedes with consternation, and alarmed the council. All the great generals were now dead; and every thing was to be feared under the reign of a young king, who had hitherto given no very favorable impressions of his character. He hardly ever assisted at the council; and when he did, it was only to sit cross-legged on the table, absent, inattentive, and seemingly regardless of every thing that passed.

The council happened to hold a deliberation in his presence concerning the dangerous situation of affairs; some of the members proposed to avert the storm by negotiations, when all of a sudden Charles rose, with an air of gravity and assurance, like a man of superior consequence who has chosen his side: "Gentlemen," said he, "I am resolved never to begin an unjust war, nor ever to finish a just one but by the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will attack the first that shall declare against me; and, after having conquered him, I hope I shall be able to strike terror into the rest." All the old counsellors were astonished at this declaration, and looked at one another without daring to reply. Agreeably surprised to find their king possessed of such noble sentiments, and ashamed to be less sanguine in their expectations than he, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more surprised when they saw him at once bid adieu to the most innocent amusements of youth. The moment he began to make preparations for the war, he entered on a new course of life, from which he never afterwards deviated in one single instance. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæsar, he proposed to imitate those two conquerors in every thing but their vices. No longer did he indulge himself in magnificence, sports, and recreations: he reduced his table to the most rigid frugality. He had formerly been fond of gayety and dress; but from that time he was never clad otherwise than a common soldier. He was supposed to have entertained a passion for a lady of his court: whether there was any foundation for this supposition does not appear; certain it is, he ever after renounced all commerce with women, not only for fear of being governed by them, but likewise to set an example of continence to his soldiers, whom he resolved to confine within the strictest discipline; perhaps, too, from the vanity of being thought the only king that could conquer a passion so difficult to be overcome. He likewise determined to abstain from wine during the rest of his life. Some people have told me, that his only reason for taking this resolution was to subdue his vicious inclinations in every thing, and to add one virtue more to his former stock; but the greater number have assured me, that it was to punish himself for an excess he had committed, and an affront he had offered to a lady at table, even in presence of the queen-mother. If that be true, this condemnation of his own conduct, and this abstinence which he imposed upon himself during the remainder of his life, is a species of heroism no less worthy of admiration.

He began by assuring the Duke of Holstein, his brother-in-law, of a speedy assistance. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province bordering upon Holstein, in order to enable the duke to make head against the Danes. The duke indeed had need of them. His dominions were already laid waste, the castle of Gottorp taken, and the city of Tönningen pressed by an obstinate siege, to which the King of Denmark had come in person, in order to enjoy a con-

quest which he held to be certain. This spark began to throw the empire into a flame. On the one side, the Saxon troops of the King of Poland, those of Brandenburg, Wolfenbüttel, and Hesse Cassel, advanced to join the Danes. On the other, the King of Sweden's eight thousand men, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three Dutch regiments, came to the assistance of the duke. While the little country of Holstein was thus the theatre of war, two squadrons, the one from England and the other from Holland, appeared in the Baltic. These two States were guarantees of the treaty of Altona, which the Danes had broken, and were eager to assist the Duke of Holstein, because it was for the interest of their trade to check the growing power of the King of Denmark. They knew that should he once become master of the Sound, he would impose the most rigorous laws upon the commercial nations, as soon as he should be able to do it with impunity. This consideration has long induced the English and the Dutch to maintain, as much as they can, a balance of power between the princes of the North. They joined the young King of Sweden, who seemed to be in danger of being crushed by such a powerful combination of enemies, and assisted him for the very same reason that the others attacked him—namely, because they thought him incapable of defending himself.

He was taking the diversion of bear-hunting, when he received the news of the Saxons having invaded Livonia. This pastime he enjoyed in a manner equally new and dangerous. No other weapons were used but sharp-pointed sticks, with which the hunters defended themselves behind a cord stretched between two trees. A bear of a huge size came straight against the king, who, after a long struggle, by the help of the cord and stick, levelled him with the ground. It must be acknowledged, that in reading of such adventures as these, in considering the surprising strength of King Augustus, and reviewing the travels of the czar, we are almost tempted to think that we live in the times of Hercules and Theseus.

Charles set out for his first campaign on the eighth day of May, new style, in the year 1700, and left Stockholm, whither

he never returned. An innumerable company of people attended him to the port of Carlscrona, offering up their prayers for his safety, bedewing the ground with their tears, and expressing their admiration of his virtue. Before he left Sweden, he established at Stockholm a council of defence, composed of several senators, who were to take care of whatever concerned the navy, the army, and the fortifications of the country. The body of the senate were provisionally to regulate every thing besides, in the interior government of the kingdom. Having thus settled the administration of public affairs, and freed his mind from every other care, he devoted himself entirely to war. His fleet consisted of three-and-forty vessels: that in which he sailed, named the King Charles, and the largest ship that had ever been seen, was a ship of a hundred and twenty guns. Count Piper, his first minister, General Rehnskiöld, and the Count de Guiscard, the French ambassador in Sweden, embarked along with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies. The Danish fleet declined the combat, and gave the three combined fleets an opportunity of approaching so near to Copenhagen, as to throw some bombs into it.

Certain it is, it was the king himself that first proposed to General Rehnskiöld to make a descent, and to besiege Copenhagen by land, while it should be blocked up by sea. Rehnskiöld was surprised to receive a proposal that discovered as much prudence as courage, from such a young and inexperienced prince. Every thing was soon made ready for the descent. Orders were given for the embarkation of five thousand men, who lay upon the coast of Sweden, and who were joined to the troops they had on board. The king quitted his large ship and went into a frigate, and they then began to dispatch towards the shore three hundred grenadiers in small shallops. Among the shallops were some flat-bottomed boats that carried fascines, chevaux-de-frise, and the instruments of the pioneers. Five hundred chosen men followed in other shallops. Last of all came the king's men-of-war, with two English and two Dutch frigates, which were to favor the landing of the troops under cover of their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is situated in the Isle of Zealand, in the midst of a beautiful plain, having the Sound on the northeast, and on the east the Baltic, where the King of Sweden then lay. At the unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants were struck with consternation. Alarmed at the inactivity of their own fleet, and the motion of the Swedish ships, they looked round with terror, to observe where the storm would fall. Charles's fleet stopped over against Humblebek, within seven miles of Copenhagen. In that place the Danes immediately drew up their cavalry. Their foot were posted behind thick intrenchments; and what artillery they could bring thither, was pointed against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate to throw himself into the first shallop, at the head of his guards. The French ambassador was at his side. "Sir," said the king to him, in Latin (for he would never speak French), "you have no quarrel with the Danes; you need go no farther, if you please." "Sir," answered the Count de Guiscard, in French, "the king my master has ordered me to attend your majesty. I hope you will not this day banish me from your court, which never before appeared so splendid." So saying, he gave his hand to the king, who leaped into the shallop, whither he was followed by Count Piper and the ambassador. They advanced under shelter of the cannon of the ships that favored the landing. The small boats were still about three hundred paces from the shore. Charles, impatient to land, jumped into the sea, sword in hand, the water reaching above his waist. His ministers, the French ambassador, the officers and soldiers, immediately followed his example, and marched up to the shore, amid a shower of musket-shot from the enemy. The king, who had never in his life before heard a discharge of muskets loaded with ball, asked Major Stuart, who stood next to him, what meant that whistling which he heard. "It is the noise of the musket-balls which they fire upon you," replied the major. "Very well," said the king, "henceforward that shall be my music." At that instant the major received a shot in his

shoulder, and a lieutenant on the other side of him fell dead at his feet.

It is usual for troops that are attacked in their trenches to be beaten, because the assailants have always an impetuosity of courage, which the defenders cannot have; and besides, to wait for the enemy in our lines is frequently a confession of our own weakness, and of their superiority. The Danish horse and foot took to their heels, after a feeble resistance. The king, having become master of their intrenchments, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God for the first success of his arms. He forthwith caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and himself marked out the place for the encampment. Meanwhile he sent back his vessels to Scania, a port of Sweden opposite to Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thousand men. Every thing conspired to favor the ardor of Charles's courage. The nine thousand men were upon the shore ready to embark, and next day a favorable wind brought them safe to the place of their destination.

All this passed within sight of the Danish fleet, which did not venture to advance. Copenhagen, struck with terror, immediately sent deputies to the king, beseeching him not to bombard the city. He received them on horseback, at the head of his regiment of guards, and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He exacted from the citizens four hundred thousand rix-dollars, commanding them, at the same time, to supply his camp with all kinds of provisions, for which he assured them they should be honestly paid. They brought the provisions, because they durst not disobey; but they little expected that conquerors would condescend to pay for them; and those who brought them were surprised to find that they were generously and instantly paid, even by the meanest soldier in the army. There had long prevailed among the Swedish troops a strict discipline, which had greatly contributed to the success of their arms; and the king rendered it still more rigid. No soldier durst refuse to pay for what he had bought, still less to go marauding, or even out of the camp What is more, he would not allow his troops, after a victory

to strip the bodies of the dead, until they had obtained his permission; and he easily brought them to the observance of this injunction. Prayers were regularly said in his camp twice a day, at seven in the morning and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to attend them himself, in order to give his soldiers an example of piety as well as of valor. His camp, which was better regulated than Copenhagen, had every thing in abundance,—the peasants choosing much rather to sell their provisions to their enemies, the Swedes, than to the Danes, who did not pay them so well. Even the citizens were more than once obliged to come to the Swedish camp to purchase those provisions which they could not find in their own markets.

The King of Denmark was then in Holstein, whither he seemed to have gone for no other purpose than to raise the siege of Tönningen. He saw the Baltic covered with the enemy's ships, and a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and just upon the point of taking possession of his capital. He caused an edict to be published throughout all his dominions, promising liberty to every one that should take up arms against the Swedes. This declaration was of great weight in a country which was formerly free, but where all the peasants, and even many of the citizens, are now slaves. Charles sent word to the King of Denmark, that his only intention in making war was to oblige him to come to a peace; and that he must either resolve to do justice to the Duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen levelled with the ground, and his dominions laid waste with fire and sword. The Dane was too happy in having to do with a conqueror who valued himself on his regard for justice. A congress was held in the town of Travendahl, which lies on the frontiers of Holstein. The King of Sweden would not allow the negotiations to be protracted by the arts of ministers, but determined to have the treaty finished with the same rapidity with which he had made his descent upon Zealand. In effect, a peace was concluded, on the fifth of August, to the advantage of the Duke of Holstein, who was indemnified for all the expenses of the war, and delivered from

oppression. The King of Sweden, fully satisfied with having succored his ally and humbled his enemy, would accept of nothing for himself. Thus Charles XII, at eighteen years of age, began and finished this war in less than six weeks.

Exactly at the same time the King of Poland invested Riga, the capital of Livonia; and the czar was advancing on the east at the head of nearly a hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old Count Dalberg, a Swedish general, who, at the age of eighty, joined all the fire of youth to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Flemming, afterwards minister of Poland, a man of distinguished abilities as well in the field as the cabinet, and Patkul the Livonian, pushed the siege with great vigor, under the direction of the king; but notwithstanding several advantages which the besiegers had gained, the experience of old Count Dalberg baffled all their efforts, and the King of Poland began to despair of being able to take the town. At last he laid hold of an honorable pretext for raising the siege. Riga was full of merchants' goods, belonging to the Dutch. The States-General ordered their ambassador at the court of Augustus to represent the matter to his majesty. The King of Poland did not long resist their importunities, and agreed to raise the siege rather than occasion the least damage to his allies, who were not greatly surprised at this stretch of complaisance, to the real cause of which they were no strangers.

The only thing that Charles had now to do towards the finishing of his first campaign, was to march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexiovitch. He was the more exasperated against him, as there were still at Stockholm three Muscovite ambassadors, who had lately sworn to the renewal of an inviolable peace. Possessed of the most incorruptible integrity, he could not conceive how a legislator, like the czar, should make a jest of what ought to be held so sacred. The young prince, whose sense of honor was extremely refined, never imagined that there could be one system of morality for kings, and another for private persons. The Emperor of Muscovy had just published a manifesto, which he had much better have sup-

pressed. He there alleged, as the reason of the war, the little respect that had been shown him when he went incognito to Riga, and the extravagant prices his ambassadors had been obliged to pay for provisions. Such were the mighty injuries for which he ravaged Ingria with eighty thousand men!

At the head of this great army, he appeared before Narva on the first of October, a season more severe in that climate than the month of January is at Paris. The czar, who in such weather would sometimes ride post for four hundred leagues to see a mine or a canal, was not more sparing of his troops than of himself. He knew, moreover, that the Swedes, ever since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, could make war in the depth of winter as well as in summer; and he wanted to accustom the Russians likewise to forget all distinction of seasons, and to render them, one day, equal to the Swedes. Thus, in a time when frost and snow compel other nations in more temperate climates to agree to a suspension of arms, the czar Peter besieged Narva, within thirty degrees of the pole, and Charles XII advanced to its relief. The czar had no sooner arrived before the place, than he immediately put in practice what he had learned in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on all sides, raised redoubts at certain distances, and opened the trenches himself. He had given the command of his troops to the Duke de Croy, a German, and an able general, but who at that time was little assisted by the Russian officers. As for himself, he had no other rank in the army than that of a private lieutenant. He thereby gave an example of military obedience to his nobility, hitherto unacquainted with discipline, and accustomed to march at the head of ill-armed slaves, without experience and without order. There was nothing strange in seeing him who had turned carpenter at Amsterdam, in order to procure himself fleets, serve as lieutenant at Narva, to teach his subjects the art of war.

The Muscovites are strong and indefatigable, and perhaps as courageous as the Swedes; but it requires time and discipline to render troops warlike and invincible. The only regiments that could be depended upon were commanded by some

German officers; but their number was very inconsiderable. The rest were barbarians, forced from their forests, and covered with the skins of wild beasts—some armed with arrows, and others with clubs. Few of them had guns; none of them had ever seen a regular siege; and there was not one good cannoneer in the whole army. A hundred and fifty cannon, which one would have thought must have soon reduced the little town of Narva to ashes, were hardly able to make a breach, while the artillery of the city mowed down at every discharge whole ranks of the enemy in their trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications: Baron Horn, who commanded there, had not a thousand regular troops; and yet this immense army could not reduce it in six weeks.

It was now the fifteenth of November, when the czar learned that the King of Sweden had crossed the sea with two hundred transports, and was advancing to the relief of Narva. The Swedes were not above twenty thousand strong. The czar had no advantage but that of numbers. Far, therefore, from despising his enemy, he employed every art in order to crush him. Not content with eighty thousand men, he resolved to oppose to him another army still, and to check his progress at every step. He had already given orders for the march of about thirty thousand men, who were advancing from Pleskov with great expedition. He then took a step that would have rendered him contemptible, could a legislator who had performed such great and glorious actions incur that imputation. He left his camp, where his presence was necessary, to go in quest of this new army, which might have arrived well enough without him, and seemed by this conduct to betray his fear of engaging in his intrenchments a young and inexperienced prince who might come to attack him.

Be that as it may, he resolved to shut up Charles XII between two armies. Nor was this all: a detachment of thirty thousand men from the camp before Narva were posted at a league's distance from the city, directly in the King of Sweden's road; twenty thousand Strelitz were placed farther off, upon the same road; and five thousand others composed an advanced

guard; and he must necessarily force his way through all these troops before he could reach the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and double fosse. The King of Sweden had landed at Pernau, in the Gulf of Riga, with about sixteen thousand foot, and little more than four thousand horse. From Pernau he made a flying march to Revel, followed by all his cavalry, and only by four thousand foot. He always marched in the van of his army, without waiting for the rear. He soon found himself, with his eight thousand men only, before the first posts of the enemy. He immediately resolved, without the least hesitation, to attack them, one after another, before they could possibly learn with what a small number they had to engage. The Muscovites, seeing the Swedes come upon them, imagined they had a whole army to encounter. The advanced guard of five thousand men, posted among rocks, a station where one hundred resolute men might have stopped the march of a large army, fled at their first approach. The twenty thousand men that lay behind them, perceiving the flight of their fellow-soldiers, took the alarm, and carried their terror and confusion with them into the camp. All the posts were carried in two days; and what upon other occasions would have been reckoned three distinct victories, did not retard the king's march for the space of one hour. He appeared then at last with his eight thousand men, exhausted by the fatigues of so long a march, before a camp of eighty thousand Muscovites, defended by a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; and, scarcely allowing his troops any time for rest, he instantly gave orders for the attack.

The signal was two musket-shots, and the watchword in German,—"With the aid of God." A general officer having represented to him the greatness of the danger, "What," said he, "do you not think that with my eight thousand brave Swedes, I may easily beat eighty thousand Russians?" But soon after, fearing that what he had said might savor too much of gasconade, he ran after the officer, and said to him, "Are you not of the same opinion? Have not I a double advantage over the enemy,—one, that their cavalry can be of no

service to them; the other, that the place being narrow, their number will only incommode them, and thus in reality I shall be stronger than they?" The officer did not care to differ from him; and thus they marched against the Muscovites about midday, on the 30th of November, 1700.

As soon as their cannon had made a breach in their intrenchments, the Swedes advanced with fixed bayonets, having a furious shower of snow on their backs, which drove full in the face of the enemy. The Russians stood the shock for half an hour, without flinching. The king made his attack upon the right of the camp, where the czar's quarter lay, hoping to come to an encounter with him, as he did not know that he had gone in quest of the forty thousand men, who were daily expected to arrive. At the first discharge of the enemy's muskets, he received a shot in his neck; but as it was a spent ball, it lodged in the folds of his black neckcloth, and did him no harm. His horse was killed under him. M. de Sparr told me that the king mounted another horse with great agility, saying, "These fellows make me go through my exercises;" and continued to fight and give orders with the same presence of mind. After an engagement of three hours, the intrenchments were forced on all sides. The king pursued the right of the enemy as far as the river Narva, with his left wing; if we may be allowed to call by that name about four thousand men, who were in pursuit of nearly forty thousand. The bridge broke under the fugitives, and the river was immediately filled with dead carcasses. The rest returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went; and finding some barracks, they took post behind them. There they defended themselves for a while, as they were not able to make their escape; but at last their generals, Dolgorovki, Golovkin, and Federovitch, surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their arms at his feet; and while they were presenting them to him, the Duke de Croy came up and surrendered himself with thirty officers.

Charles received all these prisoners of distinction with as much civility and politeness as if he had been paying them the honors of an entertainment in his own court. He detained

none but the general officers. All the subalterns and common soldiers were disarmed and conducted to the river Narva, where they were supplied with boats for passing over, and allowed to return to their own country. In the mean time night came on, and the right wing of the Muscovites still continued the fight. The Swedes had not lost above six hundred men. Eight thousand Muscovites had been killed in their intrenchments; many were drowned; many had crossed the river; and yet there still remained in the camp a sufficient number to cut off the Swedes to the last man. But the loss of battles is not so much owing to the number of the killed, as to the timidity of those who survive. The king employed the small remains of the day in seizing upon the enemy's artillery. He took possession of an advantageous post between the camp and the city, where he slept a few hours upon the ground, wrapt up in his cloak, intending, at daybreak, to fall upon the left wing of the enemy, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning, General Vede, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and of his having dismissed all the subaltern officers and soldiers, sent a messenger to him, begging he would grant him the same favor. The conqueror replied, that he should have it, provided he would come at the head of his troops, and make them lay their arms and colors at his feet. Soon after, the general appeared with his Muscovites, to the number of about thirty thousand. They marched, both soldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, through less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers, as they passed the king, threw their guns and swords upon the ground, and the officers presented him with their ensigns and colors. He caused the whole of this multitude to be conducted over the river, without detaining a single soldier. Had he kept them, the number of prisoners would at least have been five times greater than that of the conquerors.

After this, he entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the Duke de Croy, and other general officers of the Muscovites. He ordered their swords to be restored to them all; and know-

ing that they wanted money, and that the merchants of Narva would not lend them any, he sent a thousand ducats to the Duke de Croy, and five hundred to every Muscovite officer, who could not sufficiently admire the civility of this treatment, of which they were incapable of forming the least conception. An account of the victory was immediately drawn up at Narva, in order to be sent to Stockholm, and to the allies of Sweden; but the king expunged with his own hand every circumstance in the relation that tended too much to his own honor, or seemed to reflect upon the czar. His modesty, however, could not hinder them from striking at Stockholm several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among others they struck one which represented the king on one side, standing on a pedestal, to which were chained a Muscovite, a Dane, and a Pole; and on the reverse a Hercules, holding his club, and treading upon a Cerberus, with this inscription: *Tres uno contudit ictu.*

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva, there was one whose fate exhibited a remarkable instance of the great inconstancy of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir of the King of Georgia; his name the czarevitch Artschelov. This title of czarevitch, among the Tartars, as well as in Muscovy, signifies prince, or son of the czar; for the word *czar*, or *tsar*, signified king among the ancient Scythians, from whom all these people are descended, and is not derived from the *Cæsars* of Rome, so long unknown to these barbarians. His father Mittelleski, czar, and master of the most beautiful part of the country lying between the mountains of Ararat and the eastern coasts of the Black Sea, having been expelled from his kingdom by his own subjects, in 1688, had rather chosen to throw himself into the arms of the Emperor of Muscovy, than to apply to the Turks for assistance. His son, a youth of nineteen years of age, followed Peter the Great in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken fighting by some Finland soldiers, who had already stripped him, and were upon the point of killing him. Count Rehnskiöld rescued him from their hands, supplied him with clothes, and presented him to

his master. Charles sent him to Stockholm, where the unfortunate prince died a few years after. The king, upon seeing him depart, could not help making, in the hearing of his officers, a very natural reflection on the strange fate of an Asiatic prince, born at the foot of Mount Caucasus, and going to live prisoner among the snows of Sweden. "It is just," said he, "as if I were one day to be a prisoner among the Crim Tartars." These words made no impression at that time; but, in the sequel, there was but too much occasion to remember them, when the event had proved them to be a prediction.

The czar was advancing, by long marches, with a body of forty thousand Russians, in full hopes of surrounding his enemy on all sides; but before he had proceeded half way, he received intelligence of the battle of Narva, and of the dispersion of his whole army. He was not so foolish as to think of attacking, with his forty thousand raw and undisciplined troops, a conqueror who had lately defeated eighty thousand men in their intrenchments. He returned home, with a determined resolution of disciplining his troops, at the same time that he civilized his subjects. "I know," said he, "that the Swedes will teach us to beat them." Moscow, his capital, was in the utmost terror and consternation at the news of this defeat. Such was the pride and ignorance of the people, that they actually imagined they had been conquered by a power more than human, and that the Swedes were so many magicians. This opinion was so general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up to St. Nicholas, the patron of Muscovy, on the occasion. The form of these prayers is too singular to be omitted. It runs thus:

"O thou, who art our perpetual comforter in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee, in our sacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus abandoned us? We implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, unconquerable destroyers, when, like lions and bears robbed of their young, they fell upon, terrified, wounded, and slew, by thousands, us who are thy people. As it is impossi

ble that this should have happened without sorcery and witchcraft, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and standard-bearer, to deliver us from this troop of sorcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompense they deserve."

While the Muscovites were thus complaining of their defeat to St. Nicholas, Charles XII returned thanks to God, and prepared himself for new victories.

The King of Poland had reason to fear that his enemy, already victorious over the Danes and the Muscovites, would soon turn his arms against him. He entered into a closer alliance with the czar than ever he had done before. These two princes agreed upon an interview, in order to concert their measures. They met at Birzen, a small town in Lithuania, without any of those formalities which serve only to retard business, and neither suited their situation nor their humor. The princes of the North visit one another with a familiarity that has not yet taken place in the more southern parts of Europe. Peter and Augustus spent fifteen days together, in the enjoyment of pleasures, which were even somewhat extravagant; for the czar, amid his cares for the reformation of his subjects, could never correct his dangerous inclination to debauchery.

The King of Poland engaged to furnish the czar with fifty thousand German troops, which were to be hired from several princes, and for which the czar was to pay. Peter, on the other hand, was to send fifty thousand Russians into Poland, to learn the art of war, and promised to pay to Augustus three millions of rix-dollars in two years. This treaty, had it been carried into execution, might have proved fatal to the King of Sweden: it was a sure and ready method of rendering the Muscovites good soldiers; perhaps it was forging chains for a part of Europe.

Charles XII exerted his utmost endeavors to prevent the King of Poland from reaping any benefit from this league. After having passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia in the neighborhood of Riga, the very town which Augus-

tus had in vain besieged. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Düina, which is very broad in that place: and Charles, who lay on the other side of the river, was obliged to dispute the passage. The Saxons were not commanded by their own prince, who was then sick, but were headed by Marshal Steinau, who acted as general, under whom commanded Prince Ferdinand, duke of Courland, and that same Patkul who had formerly, at the hazard of his life, vindicated the privileges of his country against Charles XI, by his pen, and now defended the same cause against Charles XII, by his arms. The King of Sweden had caused some large boats to be built of a new construction, whose sides were much higher than ordinary, and could be raised or let down, like a drawbridge. When raised, they covered the troops on board, and when let down, they served as a bridge to land them. He likewise made use of another artifice. Having observed that the wind blew from the north, where he lay, to the south, where the enemy were encamped, he set fire to a large heap of wet straw, which, diffusing a thick smoke over the river, prevented the Saxons from seeing his troops, or observing what he was going to do. Under cover of this cloud, he dispatched some barks filled with more of the same smoking straw; so that the cloud, always increasing, and being driven by the wind directly to the face of the enemy, rendered it impossible for them to know whether the king was passing or not. Meanwhile he alone conducted the execution of his stratagem; and when he had reached the middle of the river, "Well," said he to General Rehnskiöld, "the Düina will be as favorable to us as the sea of Copenhagen; take my word for it, general, we shall beat them." He arrived at the other side in a quarter of an hour, and was sorry to find that he was only the fourth person that leaped on shore. He forthwith landed his cannon, and drew up his troops in order of battle, while the enemy, blinded with smoke, could make no opposition, except by a few random shots. At last the mist being dispersed by the wind, the Saxons saw the King of Sweden already advancing against them.

Marshal Steinau lost not a moment. As soon as he observed the Swedes, he rushed upon them with the flower of his cavalry. The violent shock of this body falling upon the Swedes just as they were forming, threw them into confusion. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The King of Sweden rallied them in a moment, in the midst of the water, with as much composure as if he had been making a review; then the Swedes, marching more compact than before, repulsed Marshal Steinau, and advanced into the plain. Steinau, finding his troops beginning to stagger, acted like an able general. He made them retire into a dry place, flanked with a morass and a wood, where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time which the Saxons had thus obtained, of recovering from their first surprise, restored to them their former courage. Charles immediately began the attack. He had fifteen thousand men; Steinau and the Duke of Courland about twelve thousand, with no other artillery than one dismounted cannon. The battle was obstinate and bloody The duke had two horses killed under him: he penetrated thrice into the heart of the king's guards; but at length being unhorsed by a blow with the butt-end of a musket, his army was thrown into confusion, and no longer disputed the victory. His cuirassiers carried him off with great difficulty, all bruised, and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses' heels, which trampled on him.

Immediately after this victory, the King of Sweden advanced to Mittau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of the duchy surrendered to him at discretion; it was rather a journey than a conquest. From thence he passed without delay into Lithuania, conquering wherever he came; and he felt a pleasing satisfaction, as he himself owned, when he entered triumphant into the town of Birzen, where the King of Poland and the czar had plotted his destruction but a few months before.

It was in this place that he formed the design of dethroning the King of Poland by the hands of the Poles themselves. One day when he was at table, full of this enterprise, and

observing, as usual, the strictest temperance, wrapped in profound silence, and seeming, as it were, absorbed in the greatness of his conceptions, a German colonel who waited upon him said, with an audible voice, that the meals which the czar and the King of Poland had made in the same place were somewhat different from those of his majesty. "Yes," said the king, rising, "and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion." In short, by intermixing a little policy with the force of his arms, he resolved to hasten the execution of this mighty project.

Poland, a part of the ancient Sarmatia, is somewhat larger than France, but less populous, though it is more so than Sweden. The inhabitants were converted to Christianity only about seven hundred and fifty years ago. It is somewhat surprising that the Roman language, which never penetrated into that country, is now spoken in common nowhere but in Poland; there all speak Latin, even the servants. This extensive country is very fertile; but the natives are only, on that account, so much the less industrious. The artists and tradesmen in Poland are Scotch, French, and especially Jews. The last have, in this country, nearly three hundred synagogues; and multiplying too fast, they will in time be banished from it, as they have already been from Spain. They buy the corn, the cattle, and the commodities of the country at a low rate, dispose of them at Dantzic and in Germany, and sell to the nobles at a high price wherewithal to gratify the only species of luxury which they know and love. Thus Poland, watered with the finest rivers in the world, rich in pastures and in mines of salt, and covered with luxuriant crops, remains poor in spite of its plenty, because the people are slaves, and the nobles are proud and indolent.

The constitution of Poland is the most perfect model of the ancient government of the Goths and Celts, which has been corrected or altered everywhere else. It is the only State that has preserved the name of republic together with the royal dignity.

Every gentleman has a right to give his vote in the election

of a king, and may even be elected himself. This inestimable privilege is attended with inconveniencies proportionately great. The throne is almost always exposed to sale; and as a Pole is seldom able to make the purchase, it has frequently been sold to strangers. The nobility and clergy defend their liberties against the king, and deprive the rest of the nation of theirs. The body of the people are slaves. Such is the unhappy fate of mankind, that in every country the greater number are, one way or another, enslaved by the lesser. There the peasant sows not for himself, but for his lord, to whom his person, his lands, and even the labor of his hands belong; and who can sell him, or cut his throat, with the same impunity as he kills the beasts in the field. Every gentleman is independent. He cannot be tried in a criminal cause but by an assembly of the whole nation; he cannot be arrested till once he is condemned; so that he is hardly ever punished. There are great numbers of poor among them. These engage in the service of the more wealthy, receive wages from them, and perform the meanest offices. They rather choose to serve their equals than to enrich themselves by commerce; and, while they are dressing their masters' horses, they give themselves the title of electors of kings and destroyers of tyrants.

To see a king of Poland in the pomp of royal majesty, one would take him to be the most absolute prince in Europe; and yet he is the least so. The Poles really make with him that contract which, in other nations, is only supposed to be made between the king and the subjects. The King of Poland, even at his consecration, and in swearing to the *Pacta Conventa*, absolves his subjects from the oath of allegiance, should he ever violate the laws of the republic.

He nominates to all offices, and confers all honors. Nothing is hereditary in Poland but the lands and rank of the nobility. The son of a palatine, or of a king, has no claim to the dignity of his father. But there is this great difference between the king and the republic, that the former cannot strip any person of an office after he has bestowed it upon him; whereas

the latter may deprive him of the crown, if he transgress the laws of the State.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, frequently sell their votes but seldom their elections. They have no sooner elected a king than they begin to oppose his ambition, and to oppose him by their cabals. The grandees whom he has made, and whom he cannot unmake, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those who are attached to the court are hated by the rest of the nobility, which always forms two parties,—a division unavoidable, and even necessary in those countries that must needs have kings, and yet preserve their liberties.

Whatever concerns the nation is regulated in the assemblies of the states-general, which are called diets. These States are composed of the body of the senate, and of several gentlemen. The senators are the palatines and the bishops; the gentlemen the deputies of the particular diets in each palatinate. In these great assemblies presides the Archbishop of Gnesen, primate of Poland, vicar of the kingdom during an interregnum, and, next to the king, the first person in the State. Besides him there is seldom any other cardinal in Poland; because the Roman purple giving no precedence in the senate, a bishop, who should be made a cardinal, would be obliged either to take his rank as senator, or to renounce the substantial rights of the dignity he enjoys in his own country to support the vain pretensions of a foreign honor.

These diets, by the laws of the kingdom, must be held alternately in Poland and Lithuania. The deputies frequently transact their business sabre in hand, like the ancient Sarmatians, from whom they are sprung; and sometimes, too, intoxicated with liquor, a vice to which the Sarmatians were utter strangers. Every gentleman deputed to the states-general enjoys the same right which the tribunes of the people had at Rome, of opposing themselves to the laws of the senate. Any one gentleman, who says, "I protest," stops by that single word the unanimous resolution of all the rest; and if he quits the place where the diet is held, the assembly is of course dissolved.

To the disorders arising from this law, they apply a remedy still more dangerous. Poland is seldom without two factions. Unanimity in their diets being rendered thus impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by a plurality of voices, without any regard to the protestation of the lesser number. These assemblies, condemned by the laws, but authorized by custom, are held in the king's name, though frequently without his consent, and even against his interest; in much the same manner as the League in France made use of the name of Henry III, to ruin him; and as the parliament in England, that brought Charles I, to the block, began by prefixing his majesty's name to all the resolutions they took to destroy him. When the public commotions are ended, it belongs to the general diets either to confirm or repeal the acts of these confederacies. A diet can even cancel the acts of a former diet; for the same reason that, in absolute monarchies, a king can abolish the laws of his predecessor, or even those which have been made by himself.

The nobility, who make the laws of the republic, likewise constitute its strength. They appear on horseback, completely armed, upon great emergencies, and are able to make up a body of a hundred thousand men. This great army, which is called *pospolite*, moves slowly, and is ill governed. It cannot continue assembled for any length of time, for want of provisions and forage: it has neither discipline, subordination, nor experience; but that love of liberty by which it is animated will always make it formidable.

These nobles may be conquered, or dispersed, or even held in subjection for a time; but they soon shake off the yoke. They compare themselves to the reeds, which the storm may bend to the ground, but which rise again the moment the storm is over. It is for this reason that they have no places of strength: they will have themselves to be the only bulwarks of the republic, nor do they ever suffer their king to build any forts, lest he should employ them less for their defence than their oppression. Their country is entirely open, excepting two or three frontier places; so that if in a war, whether civil

or foreign, they resolve to sustain a siege, they are obliged to raise fortifications of earth in a hurry, to repair the old walls that are half ruined, and to enlarge the ditches that are almost filled up; and the town is commonly taken before the intrenchments are finished.

The pospolite are not always on horseback to defend their country; they never mount but by order of the diets, or sometimes in imminent dangers, by the simple orders of the king.

The usual guard of Poland is an army, which ought to be maintained at the expense of the republic. It is composed of two bodies, under two grand generals. The first body is that of Poland, and should consist of thirty-six thousand men; the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is that of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other: though nominated by the king, they are accountable for their conduct to the republic alone, and have an unlimited power over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments; and it is their business to maintain and pay them as well as they can. But as they are seldom paid themselves, they ravage the country, ruin the peasants, to satisfy their own avidity, and that of their soldiers. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than they do in the towns; and their tents are more elegant than their houses. The cavalry, which makes up two thirds of the army, is composed almost entirely of gentlemen; and is remarkable for the beauty of their horses, and the richness of the accoutrements and harness.

The gendarmes especially, whom they distinguish into hussars and pancernes, never march without several valets in their retinue, who lead their horses; those are furnished with bridles that are ornamented with plates and nails of silver, embroidered saddles, saddle-bows, and gilt stirrups, or stirrups made of massive silver, with large housings trailing on the ground, after the manner of the Turks, whose magnificence the Poles endeavor to imitate as much as they can.

But if the cavalry are fine and gorgeous, the infantry were at that time proportionably wretched, ill clothed, and ill

armed, without regimentals, or any thing uniform. Such at least was their condition, till towards the year 1710: and yet these infantry, who resemble the wandering Tartars, support hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the hardships of war with surprising resolution.

One may still discern in the Polish soldiers the character of their ancestors, the ancient Sarmatians, the same want of discipline, the same fury in the assault, the same readiness to fly and to return to the charge, and the same cruel disposition to slaughter when they conquer.

The King of Poland flattered himself at first, that in this pressing necessity, these two bodies would support his cause; that the Polish pospolite would take up arms at his orders; and that these forces, joined to the Saxon subjects, and to his Russian allies, would compose an army, before which the small number of the Swedes would not dare to appear. But he found himself, almost in an instant, deprived of these succors by means of that very eagerness he discovered to have them all at once.

Accustomed, in his hereditary dominions, to the exercise of absolute power, he too fondly imagined that he might govern in Poland as he did in Saxony. The beginning of his reign raised malcontents. His first proceedings provoked the party that had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest of the nation. The Poles murmured to see the towns filled with Saxon garrisons, and their frontiers lined with Saxon troops. This nation, more anxious to preserve its liberty than to attack its neighbors, considered the war with Sweden, and the irruption into Livonia, as enterprises by no means advantageous to the republic. It is very difficult to hinder a free people from seeing their true interest. The Poles were sensible, that if this war, undertaken without their consent, should prove unsuccessful, their country, open on all sides, would become a prey to the King of Sweden; and that, should it be crowned with success, they would be enslaved by their own king, who being master of Livónia, as well as of Saxony, would shut up Poland between these two States. In this alternative,

either of becoming slaves to the king, whom they had elected, or of being pillaged by Charles XII, who was justly incensed, they raised a clamor against the war, which they believed to be declared rather against themselves than against Sweden. They considered the Saxons and the Muscovites as the forgers of their chains; and observing soon after that the King of Sweden had overcome every thing that opposed his progress, and was advancing with a victorious army into the heart of Lithuania, they loudly exclaimed against their sovereign, and with so much the greater freedom as he was unfortunate.

Lithuania was at that time divided into two parties, that of the princes of Sapieha, and that of Oginski. The animosity between these two factions, occasioned at first by private quarrels, had at last been inflamed into a civil war. The King of Sweden engaged the princes of Sapieha in his interest; and Oginski being poorly supported by the Saxons, found his party almost annihilated. The Lithuanian army, reduced by these troubles and the want of money to an inconsiderable number, was partly dispersed by the conquerors. The few that still held out for the King of Poland were separated into small bodies of fugitive troops, who wandered up and down the country, and subsisted by spoil. Augustus beheld nothing in Lithuania but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and a hostile army, conducted by a young king, incensed, victorious, and implacable.

There was indeed an army in Poland; but instead of six-and-thirty thousand men, the number prescribed by the law, it did not amount to eighteen thousand; and it was not only ill-paid and ill-armed, but the generals were as yet undetermined what course to take.

The only resource of the king was, to order the nobility to follow him; but he durst not expose himself to the mortification of a refusal, which, by discovering his weakness too plainly, would consequently have increased it.

In this state of trouble and uncertainty, all the palatinates of the kingdom desired the king to call a diet; in the same manner as in England, during times of danger, all the bodies

of the State present addresses to the sovereign, entreating him to convoke a parliament. Augustus had more need of an army than a diet, in which the actions of kings are severely canvassed. However, that he might not incense the nation beyond the possibility of reconciliation, he found it necessary to assemble a diet, which was accordingly appointed to be held at Warsaw on the second of December, 1701. He soon perceived that Charles XII had, at least, as much power in this assembly as himself. Those who favored the Sapieha, the Lubomirski and their friends, the palatine Leszczynski, treasurer of the crown, and especially the partisans of the princes Sobieski, were all of them secretly attached to the King of Sweden.

The most considerable of these partisans, and the most dangerous to the King of Poland, was Cardinal Radjouski, archbishop of Gnesen, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diet. He was a man full of artifice and cunning, and entirely under the influence of an ambitious woman, who was called by the Swedes, Madame Cardinaless, and who was inciting him on to intrigue and faction. King John Sobieski, the predecessor of Augustus, had first made him bishop of Warmia and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radjouski, when no more than a bishop, had obtained the cardinal's hat by the favor of the same prince. This dignity soon opened his way to the primacy; and thus by uniting in his own person whatever can impose upon mankind, he was able to undertake the most arduous enterprises without incurring the least danger.

After the death of John, he employed all his interest to raise Prince James Sobieski to the throne; but the torrent of public hatred ran so strong against the father, notwithstanding the eminent qualities of which he was possessed, that it entirely excluded the son from that dignity. After this, the cardinal-primate joined his endeavors with those of the Abbé de Polignac, the French ambassador, to procure the crown to the Prince of Conti, who was actually elected. But the money and troops of Saxony defeated all his negotiations. At last he suffered himself to be drawn over to the party that crowned

the Elector of Saxony, and patiently waited for an opportunity of sowing dissension between the new king and the nation.

The victories of Charles XII, the protector of Prince James Sobieski, the civil war in Lithuania, the general alienation of men's minds from King Augustus—all these circumstances made the cardinal-primate believe that the time had now come when he might safely send back Augustus into Saxony, and open for King John's son the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the hatred of the Poles, had now become their darling, ever since the time that Augustus had lost the public favor; but he durst not as yet entertain the most distant hopes of so great a revolution, of which, however, the cardinal was already laying the foundation.

At first he seemed desirous of effecting a reconciliation between the king and the republic, and dispatched circular letters, dictated in appearance by the spirit of charity and concord—a common and well-known snare, in which, however, the people are always caught. He wrote an affecting letter to the King of Sweden, conjuring him, in the name of that Saviour whom all Christians adore, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII answered the intentions of the cardinal rather than his words. Meanwhile he remained with his victorious army in the great Duchy of Lithuania, declaring that he would not disturb the diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against the Poles; and that, far from attacking, he came only to deliver them from oppression. These letters and these answers were calculated for the public. The emissaries that were continually going and coming between the cardinal and Count Piper, and the secret meetings held at the prelate's house, were the springs that regulated the motions of the diet. They proposed to dispatch an embassy to Charles XII, and unanimously required of the king that he should bring no more Muscovites upon their frontiers, and that he should send back his Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Augustus had already done what the diet demanded of him. The league, secretly concluded with the Muscovites at Birzen, was now become as useless as it had

once appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send to the czar the fifty thousand Germans whom he had promised to raise in the empire. The czar himself, a dangerous neighbor to Poland, was in no haste to assist a divided kingdom, from whose misfortunes he hoped to derive some advantage. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand Muscovites into Lithuania, who did more mischief than the Swedes, flying everywhere before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles; till at last, being pursued by the Swedish generals, and finding no more to pillage, they returned in shoals to their own country. With regard to the shattered remains of the Saxon army that was beaten at Riga, Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony, hoping by this sacrifice, involuntary as it was, to regain the affection of the Poles who were so highly incensed against him.

The war now was turned into intrigues. The diet was split into almost as many factions as there were palatines. One day the interests of King Augustus prevailed, the next they were disregarded. Every one called out for liberty and justice, and yet no one knew what liberty and justice were. The time was spent in private cabals and public harangues. The diet neither knew what they would be at, nor what they ought to do. Great companies seldom steer the right course in times of public commotions; because the factious are bold, and the virtuous are commonly diffident. The diet broke up in a tumultuous manner on the 17th of February, 1702, after having spent three months in cabals, without coming to any fixed resolution. The senators, consisting of the palatines and bishops, remained at Warsaw. The senate of Poland has a right of making laws provisionally, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being less numerous, and accustomed to business, was far less tumultuous, and decided with greater dispatch.

They decreed that the embassy, which was proposed in the diet, should be sent to the King of Sweden; and that the pospolite should take to arms, and hold themselves in readiness at all events. They made several regulations for quelling the

commotions in Lithuania, and for diminishing the authority of the king, though less to be dreaded than that of Charles XII.

Augustus rather chose to receive hard laws from his conqueror than from his subjects. He resolved to sue for a peace to the King of Sweden, and to conclude a secret treaty with that monarch. This was a step which he was obliged to conceal from the senate, whom he considered as an enemy still more untractable than Charles. As the affair was of a very delicate nature, he intrusted it to the Countess of Königsmark, a Swedish lady of high birth, to whom he was at that time attached. This is the lady whose brother became so famous by his unfortunate death, and whose son commanded the French armies with so much glory and success. Celebrated as she was for her wit and beauty, she was more capable than any minister of bringing a negotiation to a happy period. Moreover, as she had an estate in the dominions of Charles XII, and had resided a long time at his court, she had a very plausible pretext for waiting upon him. Accordingly she repaired to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and immediately applied to Count Piper, who too rashly promised her an audience of his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her the most amiable woman in Europe, possessed the happy talent of speaking the languages of several countries she had never seen, with as much ease and propriety as if she had been a native. She even amused herself sometimes in writing French verses, which one might have easily mistaken for the production of a person born at Versailles. Those which she composed on Charles XII are not beneath the dignity of history to mention. She introduced the heathen gods praising him for his different virtues. The piece concluded thus:

Enfin, chacun des Dieux discourant à sa gloire,
Le plaçait par avance au Temple de Mémoire;
Mais Vénus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.

The hero's acts while other gods proclaim,
And praise, and promise him immortal fame;
Silent sit Bacchus and the queen of love.

All her wit and charms were lost upon such a man as the King of Sweden, who constantly refused to see her. She therefore resolved to throw herself in his way, as he rode out to take the air, which he frequently did. In this attempt she at last succeeded. She met him one day in a very narrow path; and, the moment she observed him, came down from her coach. The king made her a low bow, without speaking a word to her, turned about his horse, and rode back in an instant. And thus the only advantage which the Countess of Königsmark gained from her journey, was the pleasure of seeing that the King of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The King of Poland was therefore obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He made them two proposals, which were laid before them by the Palatine of Marienburg: the one, that they should leave to him the disposal of the republic, in which case he would engage to pay the soldiers two quarters' advance out of his own revenue; the other, that they should allow him to bring back twelve thousand Saxons into Poland. The cardinal-primate returned him an answer as severe as the King of Sweden's refusal. He told the Palatine of Marienburg, in the name of the assembly, "that they had resolved to send an embassy to Charles XII, and that he would not advise him to bring back any Saxons."

In this extremity, the king was desirous of preserving at least the appearance of the royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains to wait upon Charles, and to learn from him where, and in what manner, his Swedish majesty would be pleased to receive the embassy of the king his master, and of the republic. Unhappily they had forgotten to ask from the Swedes a passport for the chamberlain. The King of Sweden, instead of giving an audience, caused him to be thrown into prison, saying, "that he expected to receive an embassy from the republic, and not from Augustus."

After this, Charles having left garrisons in some towns in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a city well known in Europe for the diets that are held there, but ill-built, and worse fortified.

A few miles on the other side of Grodno, he met the embassy of the republic, which consisted of five senators. They desired, in the first place, to have the ceremony of their introduction properly regulated, a thing with which the king was utterly unacquainted. They demanded that the senate should be complimented with the title of Most Serene, and that the coaches of the king and senators should be sent to meet them. They were told in answer, "that the republic should be styled Illustrious, and not Most Serene; that the king never used any coaches; that he had plenty of officers in his retinue, but no senators; that a lieutenant-general should be sent to meet them; and that they might come on their own horses."

Charles XII received them in his tent, with some appearance of military grandeur. Their conversation was full of caution and reserve. They said they were afraid of Charles XII, and did not love Augustus; but that it would be a shame for them to take the crown, in obedience to the orders of a stranger, from the head of that prince whom they had elected. Nothing was finally concluded, and Charles XII gave them to understand that he would settle all disputes at Warsaw.

His march was preceded by a manifesto, which the cardinal and his party spread over Poland in the space of eight days. By this writing, Charles invited all the Poles to join him in revenging their own quarrel, and endeavored to persuade them that his interest and theirs were the same. They were, however, very different; but the manifesto, supported by a powerful army, by the disorder of the senate, and by the approach of the conqueror, made a deep impression on the minds of the people. They were obliged to own Charles for their protector, because he was resolved to be so; and happy was it for them, that he contented himself with this title.

The senators who opposed Augustus published this manifesto aloud, even in the royal presence. The few who adhered to him observed a profound silence. At length, intelligence being brought that Charles was advancing by long marches, every one prepared to depart in a hurry. The cardinal left Warsaw among the first. The greatest part fled with precipi-

tation; some retired to their country-seats, there to wait the unravelling of this perplexed and intricate affair; others went to arm their friends. Nobody remained with the king but the ambassadors of the emperor and the czar, the Pope's nuncio, and a few bishops and palatines who were attached to his fortunes. He was forced to fly, though nothing as yet decided in his favor. Before his departure, he hastened to hold a council with the small body of senators who still represented the senate. Zealous as these were for his interest, they were nevertheless Poles; they had all conceived such an utter aversion to the Saxon troops, that they durst not grant him a liberty of recalling more than six thousand of them for his defence; and they even voted that these six thousand should be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and be immediately sent back upon the conclusion of a peace. The armies of the republic they left entirely to his disposal.

After this decree of the senate, the king left Warsaw, too weak to resist his enemies, and but little satisfied even with the conduct of his friends. He immediately published orders for assembling the pospolite and the two armies, which were little more than empty names. He had nothing to hope for in Lithuania, of which the Swedes were in possession. The army of Poland, reduced to a handful of men, was in want of arms and provisions, and had no great inclination for the war. Most of the nobility, intimidated, irresolute, and disaffected, remained at their country-seats. In vain did the king, authorized by the laws of the land, command every gentleman, under pain of death, to take up arms and follow him. It had even become a problematical point whether they ought to obey him or not. His chief dependence was upon the troops of the electorate, where the form of government being wholly despotic, he was under no apprehensions of being disobeyed. He had already given secret orders for the march of twelve thousand Saxons, who were advancing with great expedition. He likewise recalled the eight thousand men whom he had promised to the emperor in his war against France, and whom the necessity of his affairs now obliged him to withdraw. To intro-

duce so many Saxons into Poland, was, in effect, to alienate the affections of all his subjects, and to violate the law made by his own party, which allowed only of six thousand. But he well knew, that, if he proved victorious, they would not dare to complain, and if he should be conquered, they would never forgive him for having introduced even the six thousand. While the soldiers were arriving in troops, and while he was flying from one palatinate to another, and assembling the nobility who adhered to him, the King of Sweden reached Warsaw, on the 5th of May, 1702. The gates were opened to him at the first summons. He dismissed the Polish garrison, disbanded the city guard, posted guards of his own in all the convenient places, and ordered the inhabitants to deliver up their arms. Satisfied with having disarmed them, and unwilling to provoke them by any unnecessary severities, he demanded a contribution of no more than one hundred thousand livres. Augustus was then assembling his forces at Cracow; and was greatly surprised to see the cardinal-primate arrive among the rest. This man affected to maintain the decorum of his character to the last, and to dethrone his king with all the appearance of the most respectful behavior. He gave him to understand that the King of Sweden seemed very well inclined to come to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave to wait upon that monarch. Augustus granted him what he could not refuse, that is, the liberty of hurting himself.

The cardinal-primate immediately repaired to the King of Sweden, before whom he had not as yet ventured to appear. He saw him at Prague, not far from Warsaw, but without any of those ceremonies which had been observed in introducing the ambassadors of the republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarse blue cloth, with gilt brass buttons, jack-boots, and buff-skin gloves that reached up to his elbows. He was in a room without hangings, attended by the Duke of Holstein, Count Piper, his first minister, and several general officers. The king advanced a few steps to meet the cardinal; they talked together standing, for about a quarter of an aour; Charles put an end to the conference, by saying aloud,

"I will never give the Poles peace, till they have elected a new king." The cardinal, who expected such a declaration, caused it to be immediately notified to all the palatinates, assuring them that he was extremely sorry for it, but represented to them at the same time, the absolute necessity they were under of complying with the conqueror's request.

Upon receiving this intelligence, the King of Poland plainly perceived that he must either lose his crown, or preserve it by a battle; and he exerted his utmost efforts in order to succeed in the decision of this important quarrel. All his Saxon troops had arrived from the frontiers of Saxony. The nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he still remained, came in a body to offer him their service. He exhorted them to remember the oaths they had taken; and they promised to shed the last drop of their blood in support of his cause. Strengthened by these succors, and by the troops which bore the name of the army of the crown, he went, for the first time, in quest of the King of Sweden; nor was he long in finding him, for that prince was already advancing towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 13th of July, 1702, in a spacious plain near Clissow, between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had near four-and-twenty thousand men; Charles XII had not above twelve thousand. The battle began by a general discharge of the artillery. At the first volley of the Saxons, the Duke of Holstein, who commanded the Swedish cavalry, a young prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in his reins. The king asked if he was killed, and was answered in the affirmative. He made no reply; a few tears fell from his eyes; he covered his face with his hands for a moment; and then, of a sudden, spurring on his horse with all his might, he rushed into the thickest of the enemy at the head of the guards.

The King of Poland did every thing that could be expected from a prince who fought for his crown. Thrice in person did he rally his troops, and lead them up to the charge; but the Saxons only could be said to fight for him; the Poles, who formed his right wing, fled to a man, at the very beginning of

the battle, some through fear, and others through disaffection. The good fortune of Charles XII carried all before it; he gained a complete victory. He took possession of the enemy's camp, their colors, and artillery, and Augustus' military-chest fell into his hands. He halted not a moment on the field of battle, but marched directly to Cracow, pursuing the King of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were bold enough to shut the gates upon the conqueror. He caused them to be burst open. The garrison did not venture to fire a single gun, but were driven with whips and canes into the castle, into which the king entered pell-mell with them. Charles observing an officer of the artillery going to fire a cannon, ran up to him and snatched the match out of his hand. The commander fell on his knees before him. Three Swedish regiments were lodged at free quarters among the citizens, and the town was taxed with a contribution of a hundred thousand rix-dollars. Count Stenbock, who was appointed governor of the city, being informed that some treasures were hid in the tombs of the Polish kings, in St. Nicholas' Church, at Cracow, caused them to be opened. Nothing was found there but some ornaments of gold and silver, belonging to the churches. Of these he took a part; and Charles XII even sent a golden cup to one of the Swedish churches,—an action that might have raised the Polish Catholics against him, had any thing been able to withstand the terror of his arms.

He left Cracow with a determined resolution to pursue Augustus without intermission. At the distance of a few miles from the city, his horse fell and broke his thigh-bone. They were obliged to carry him back to Cracow, where he remained confined to his bed for six weeks, in the hands of the surgeons This accident gave Augustus a little respite. He forthwith caused it to be spread abroad through Poland and Germany, that Charles XII was killed by the fall. This report, which gained credit for some time, filled the minds of all men with doubt and apprehension. During this interval, he assembled at Marienburg, and then at Lublin, all the orders of the king.

dom, which had been already convoked at Sandomir. The assembly was very full, as few palatinates refused to send their deputies thither. He regained the affections of most of them by presents and promises, and by that affability without which absolute kings cannot be beloved, nor elective kings maintain themselves on the throne. The diet were soon undeceived concerning the false report of the King of Sweden's death; but that large body was already put in motion, and suffered itself to be carried along by the impulse it had received; all the members swore to continue faithful to their sovereign: so subject to change are all great companies! Even the cardinal-primate himself, who still pretended a regard for Augustus, repaired to the diet of Lublin; where he kissed the king's hands, and readily took the oath, as well as the other members. The substance of the oath was, that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt, any thing prejudicial to the interest of Augustus. The king excused the cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the prelate blushed while he swore to the last. The result of all the deliberations of this diet was, that the republic of Poland should maintain an army of fifty thousand men at their own expense, for the service of their sovereign; that they should allow the Swedes six weeks time to declare whether they were for peace or war; and the same time to the princes of Sapieha, the original authors of the troubles of Lithuania, to come and ask pardon from the King of Poland.

In the mean time Charles XII, being cured of his wound, overturned all their deliberations. Unalterably fixed in his resolution of forcing the Poles to dethrone their king with their own hands, he caused a new assembly to be convoked at Warsaw, by the intrigues of the cardinal, in opposition to that of Lublin. His generals represented to him, that this negotiation might possibly be involved in endless delays, and by that means be rendered ineffectual; that, in the mean time, the Muscovites were every day becoming a more equal match for his troops which he had left in Livonia and Ingria; that the skirmishes which frequently happened between the Swedes

and Russians in these provinces did not always turn out to the advantage of the former; and, finally, that his own presence might soon be necessary in those quarters. Charles, as steady in the prosecution of his schemes, as he was brisk and vigorous in action, replied: "Should it oblige me to remain here for fifty years, I will not depart till I have dethroned the King of Poland."

He left the assembly of Warsaw to combat that of Lublin, by their speeches and writings, and to justify their proceedings by the laws of the kingdom,—laws always equivocal, which each party interprets according to their pleasure, and which success alone can render incontestable. As for himself, having reinforced his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he had received from Sweden, he marched against the remains of the Saxon army, which he had beaten at Clissow, and which had found time to rally and recruit, while his fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army shunned his approach and retired towards Prussia, to the northwest of Warsaw. The river Bug lay between him and the enemy. Charles swam across it at the head of his cavalry; the infantry went to look for a ford somewhat higher. He came up with the Saxons on the first of May, 1703, at a place called Pultusk. General Steinau commanded them to the number of about ten thousand. The King of Sweden, in his precipitate march, had brought no more than the same number along with him, confident that a less number would be sufficient. So great was the terror of his arms, that one half of the Saxon troops fled at his approach, without waiting for the battle. General Steinau, with two regiments, kept his ground for a moment; but was soon hurried along in the general flight of the army, which was dispersed before it was vanquished. The Swedes did not take above a thousand prisoners, nor kill above six hundred men, having more difficulty in pursuing than in defeating the enemy.

Augustus having now nothing left him but the shattered remains of his Saxons, who were everywhere defeated, retired in haste to Thorn, an ancient city of Royal Prussia, situated

on the Vistula, and under the protection of the Poles. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it. The King of Poland, not thinking himself secure in this place, withdrew from it, and flew into every corner of Poland, where he could possibly find any soldiers, and into which the Swedes had not as yet penetrated. Meanwhile Charles, amid so many rapid marches, swimming across rivers, and hurried along with his infantry mounted behind his cavalry, had not been able to bring up his cannon to Thorn; he was therefore obliged to wait till a train of artillery should be brought from Sweden by sea.

While he tarried here, he fixed his quarters at the distance of a few miles from the city, in reconnoitering which he frequently approached too near the ramparts. In these dangerous excursions, the plain dress which he wore was of greater service to him than he imagined, as it prevented his being distinguished and marked out by the enemy, who would not have failed to fire upon him. One day, having advanced too near the fortifications, attended by one of his generals called Lieven, who was dressed in a blue coat,[1] trimmed with gold, and fearing lest the general should be too easily distinguished, he ordered him to walk behind him. To this he was prompted by that greatness of soul which was so natural to him, that it even prevented his reflecting on the imminent danger to which he exposed his own life, in order to preserve that of his subject. Lieven perceiving his error too late, in having put on a remarkable dress, which endangered all those who were near him, and being equally concerned for the king wherever he was, hesitated for a moment whether or not he should obey him. In the midst of this contest, the king took him by the arm, put himself before him, and screened him with his body. At that instant, a cannon-ball taking them in flank, struck the general dead upon the very spot which the king had scarcely left. The death of this man, killed exactly in his stead, and

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In the former editions we gave this officer a scarlet coat; but the Chaplain Norberg has so incontestably proved it to have been a blue one, that we have thought proper to correct the error.

because he had endeavored to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the opinion, which he always entertained, of absolute predestination; and made him believe that his fate, which had preserved him in such a singular manner, reserved him for the execution of greater undertakings.

Every thing succeeded with him: his negotiations and his arms were equally fortunate. He was present, as it were, in every part of Poland. His grand general, Rehnskiöld, was in the heart of the kingdom with a large body of troops. About thirty thousand Swedes, under different generals, were posted towards the north and east upon the frontiers of Muscovy, and withstood the united efforts of the whole Russian empire; and Charles was in the west, at the other end of Poland, with the flower of his army.

The King of Denmark, tied up by the treaty of Travendahl, which his weakness had hindered him from breaking, remained quiet. That prudent monarch did not venture to discover the disgust he felt at seeing the King of Sweden so near his dominions. At a greater distance towards the southwest, between the rivers Elbe and Weser, lay the Duchy of Bremen, the most remote of all the ancient conquests of the Swedes. This country was filled with strong garrisons, and opened to the conqueror a free passage into Saxony and the Empire. Thus, from the German Ocean almost to the mouth of the Borysthenes [Dnieper], comprehending the whole breadth of Europe, and even to the gates of Moscow, all was in consternation; and every one was daily expecting a general revolution. Charles's ships, which were now masters of the Baltic, were employed in transporting to Sweden the prisoners he had taken in Poland. Sweden, undisturbed in the midst of these mighty commotions, enjoyed the sweets of peace, and shared in the glory of its king, without bearing the burden of the war; inasmuch as its victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expense of the conquered.

While all the northern powers were thus kept in awe by the arms of Charles XII, the town of Dantzic ventured to incur his displeasure. Fourteen frigates and forty transports were

bringing the king a reinforcement of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition, to complete the siege of Thorn. These succors must necessarily pass up the Vistula. At the mouth of this river stands Dantzic, a free and wealthy town, which, together with Thorn and Elbing, enjoys the same privileges in Poland as the imperial towns possess in Germany. Its liberty has been alternately attacked by the Danes, the Swedes, and some German princes; and nothing has preserved it from bondage but the mutual jealousy of these rival powers. Count Stenbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, and demanded a passage for the troops and ammunition. The magistrates were guilty of a piece of imprudence very common with those who treat with people more powerful than themselves; they durst neither refuse nor grant his demands. General Stenbock obliged them to grant more than he had at first demanded. He exacted from the city a contribution of a hundred thousand crowns, as a punishment for their imprudent refusal. At last the recruits, the cannon, and ammunition, having arrived before Thorn, the siege was begun on the 22d of September.

Robel, governor of the place, defended it for a month with a garrison of five thousand men. At the expiration of that term he was obliged to surrender at discretion. The garrison were made prisoners of war, and transported to Sweden. Robel was presented to the king unarmed. That prince, who never lost an opportunity of honoring merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a handsome present in money, and dismissed him on his parole. But the poor and paltry town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place.

Elbing, built on an arm of the Vistula, founded by the Teutonic knights, and annexed likewise to Poland, did not profit by the misconduct of the Dantzicers, but hesitated too long about granting a passage to the Swedish troops. It was more severely punished than Dantzic. On the 13th of December, Charles entered it at the head of four thousand men, with bayonets fixed to the ends of their muskets. The inhabitants,

struck with terror, fell upon their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He caused them all to be disarmed; quartered his soldiers upon them; and then, having assembled the magistrates, exacted that same day a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon and four hundred thousand weight of powder, which he likewise seized. A battle gained would not have procured him so many advantages. All these successes paved the way for the dethroning of Augustus.

Hardly had the cardinal taken an oath that he would make no attempts against his sovereign, when he repaired to the assembly of Warsaw, always under the specious pretence of peace. When he arrived there, he talked of nothing but obedience and concord, though he was accompanied by a number of soldiers, whom he had raised on his own estate. At last he threw off the mask; and, on the 14th of February, 1704, declared, in the name of the assembly, "that Augustus, elector of Saxony, was incapable of wearing the crown of Poland." All the members with one voice pronounced the throne to be vacant. It was the intention of the King of Sweden, and consequently of the diet, to raise Prince James Sobieski to the throne of King John, his father. James Sobieski was then at Breslau, in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown which his father had worn. While he was one day hunting a few leagues from Breslau, in company with Prince Constantine, one of his brothers, thirty Saxon horsemen, sent privately by King Augustus, issued suddenly from a neighboring wood, surrounded the two princes, and carried them off without resistance. They had prepared fresh horses, upon which they conducted them to Leipsic, and committed them to close custody. This stroke disconcerted the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the assembly of Warsaw.

Fortune, which sports with crowned heads, exposed Augustus, almost at the same time, to the danger of being taken himself. He was at table, three leagues from Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard which was posted at some distance, when, all of a sudden, General Rehnskiöld appeared, after hav-

ing carried off the guard. The King of Poland had but just time to get on horseback, with ten others. General Rehnskiöld pursued him for four days, just upon the point of seizing him every moment. The king fled to Sandomir; the Swedish general pursued him thither, and it was only by a piece of good fortune that he made his escape.

Meanwhile the king's party and that of the cardinal treated each other as traitors to their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. Augustus, being at last obliged to accept of assistance from the Russians, was sorry that he had not applied to them sooner. One while he flew into Saxony, where his resources were exhausted; at another he returned to Poland, where no one durst to serve him; while in the mean time the King of Sweden, victorious and unmo-'ested, ruled in Poland with uncontrolled authority.

Count Piper, who was as great a politician as his master was a hero, advised Charles XII to take the crown of Poland to himself. He represented how easy it would be to accomplish such a scheme with a victorious army and a powerful party in the heart of the kingdom, which was already subdued. He tempted him with the title of "Defender of the Evangelical Religion," a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It would be easy, he said, to effect in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had effected in Sweden,—to establish the Lutheran religion, and to break the chains of the people, who were now held in slavery by the nobility and clergy. Charles yielded to the temptation for a moment; but glory was his idol. To it he sacrificed his own interest, and the pleasure he would have enjoyed in taking Poland from the Pope. He told Count Piper that he was much happier in bestowing than in gaining kingdoms; and added, with a smile, "You were made to be the minister of an Italian prince."

Charles was still near Thorn, in that part of Royal Prussia which belongs to Poland. From thence he extended his views to what was passing at Warsaw, and kept all the neighboring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother of the two Sobieskis who were carried into Silesia, came to implore his aid in

revenging his wrongs. Charles granted his desire the more readily as he thought he could easily gratify it, and that, at the same time, he should be avenging himself. But being extremely desirous of giving Poland a king, he advised Prince Alexander to mount the throne, from which fortune seemed determined to exclude his brother. Little did he expect a refusal. Prince Alexander told him that nothing should ever induce him to make an advantage of his elder brother's misfortune. The King of Sweden, Count Piper, all his friends, and especially the young Palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Leszczynski, pressed him to accept of the crown; but he remained unmoved by all their importunities. The neighboring princes were astonished to hear of this uncommon refusal, and knew not which to admire most—a king of Sweden, who, at twenty-two years of age, gave away the crown of Poland, or Prince Alexander, who refused to accept it.

BOOK III.

Stanislaus Leszczynski elected King of Poland. Death of the Cardinal-Primate. Skilful retreat of General Schulenburg. Exploits of the czar. Foundation of Petersburg. Battle of Fraustadt. Charles enters Saxony. Peace of Altranstädt. Augustus abdicates the crown in favor of Stanislaus. General Patkul, the czar's plenipotentiary, is broken upon the wheel and quartered. Charles receives the ambassadors of foreign princes in Saxony. He goes alone to Dresden to visit Augustus before his departure.

YOUNG Stanislaus Leszczynski was then deputed by the assembly of Warsaw to go to the King of Sweden and give him an account of several differences which had arisen among them since the time that Prince James was carried off. Stanislaus had a very engaging aspect, full of courage and sweetness, with an air of probity and frankness, which, of all external advantages, is certainly the greatest, and gives more weight to words than even eloquence itself. Charles was surprised to hear him talk with so much judgment of Augustus, the assembly, the cardinal-primate, and the different interests that divided Europe. King Stanislaus did me the honor to inform me that he said to the King of Sweden, in Latin, "How can we elect a king, if the two princes, James and Constantine Sobieski, are held in captivity?" and that Charles replied, "How can we deliver the republic, if we don't elect a king?" This conversation was the only intrigue that placed Stanislaus on the throne. Charles prolonged the conversation, on purpose that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience, he said aloud, that he had not seen a man so fit to reconcile all parties. He immediately made inquiry into the character of the Palatine Leszczynski, and found that he was a man of great courage and inured to labor; that he always lay

on a kind of straw mattress, requiring no service from his domestics; that he was temperate to a degree rarely known in that climate; liberal, with economy; adored by his vassals; and perhaps the only lord in Poland who had any friends, at a time when men acknowledged no ties but those of interest and faction. This character, which in many particulars resembled his own, determined him entirely. After the conference, he said aloud, "There is the man that shall always be my friend,"—the meaning of which words was soon perceived to be, "There is the man that shall be king."

As soon as the Primate of Poland understood that Charles XII had nominated the Palatine Leszczynski, in much the same manner as Alexander nominated Abdolonimus, he hastened to the King of Sweden, to try if possible to divert him from his resolution; being desirous that the crown should devolve on one Lubomirski. "But what have you to object against Stanislaus Leszczynski?" said the conqueror. "Sir," said the primate, "he is too young." "He is much about my age," replied the king dryly; and, turning his back upon the prelate, immediately dispatched Count Horn to acquaint the assembly of Warsaw that they must choose a king in five days, and that Stanislaus Leszczynski must be the man. Count Horn arrived on the 7th of July, and fixed the 12th for the day of election, with as much ease and indifference as if he had been ordering the decampment of a batallion. The cardinal-primate, disappointed of the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, where he left no stone unturned to defeat an election in which he had no share. But the King of Sweden having come incognito to Warsaw, he was obliged to hold his peace. All that the primate could do was to absent himself from the election: unable to oppose the conqueror, and unwilling to assist him, he confined himself to a useless neutrality.

On Saturday, the 12th of July, the day fixed for the election, the assembly met, at three in the afternoon, at Kolo, the place appointed for the ceremony,—the Bishop of Posnania acting as president, in the room of the cardinal-primate. He came attended by several gentlemen of the party

Count Horn and two other general officers assisted publicly at the solemnity, as ambassadors extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the evening; and the Bishop of Posnania put an end to it by declaring, in the name of the assembly, that Stanislaus was elected king of Poland. They all threw up their hats in the air, and the shouts of acclamation stifled the cries of the opposers.

It was of no service to the cardinal-primate, or to the others who had resolved to continue neutral, that they had absented themselves from the election; they were all obliged next day to come and do homage to the new king; but the greatest mortification to which they were subjected, was their being compelled to follow him to the King of Sweden's quarters. Charles paid the sovereign he had made all the honors due to a king of Poland; and, to add the greater weight to his new dignity, he furnished him with a considerable sum of money, and a sufficient number of troops.

Immediately after this, Charles XII departed from Warsaw, in order to finish the conquest of Poland. He had ordered his army to rendezvous before Lemberg [Leopold], the capital of the great palatinate of Russia, a place important in itself, and still more so on account of the riches which it contained. It was supposed it would hold out for fifteen days, by means of the fortifications with which Augustus had strengthened it. The conqueror sat down before it on the 5th of September, and next day took it by assault. All those who presumed to make resistance were put to the sword. The victorious troops, though masters of the city, did not break their ranks to go pillaging, notwithstanding the immense treasures that were said to be concealed in Lemberg. They drew up in order of battle in the great square, where the remaining part of the garrison came and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The king published his orders by sound of trumpet, commanding, under pain of death, all the inhabitants, who had any effects belonging to Augustus or his adherents, to produce them before night. The measures he took were so wisely concerted, that few ventured to disobey; and accordingly four hundred chests of gold

and silver coin, of plate and other valuable effects, were brought to his majesty.

The beginning of Stanislaus' reign was distinguished by an event of a very different nature. Some business, which absolutely required his presence, had obliged him to remain at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife, and his two daughters. The cardinal-primate, the Bishop of Posnania, and some grandees of Poland, composed his new court. It was guarded by six thousand Poles, of the army of the crown, who had lately entered into his service, but whose fidelity had not yet been put to the trial. General Horn, governor of the town, had not above fifteen hundred Swedes. The citizens of Warsaw were in a profound tranquillity, and Stanislaus proposed setting out in a few days for the conquest of Lemberg, when, all on a sudden, he was informed that a numerous army was approaching the city. This was King Augustus, who, by a fresh effort, and by one of the most dexterous marches that ever general made, had eluded the King of Sweden, and was now coming with twenty thousand men to fall upon Warsaw, and carry off his rival.

Warsaw was unfortified; the Polish troops, who defended it, were not to be relied on; Augustus held a correspondence with some of the citizens; so that, had Stanislaus remained in it, he must certainly have been ruined. He sent back his family into Posnania, under a guard of Polish troops in whom he could most confide. In this confusion, he thought he had lost his second daughter, who was about a year old, and who had been carried by her nurse into a neighboring village, where she was soon after found in a manger, as Stanislaus himself has since informed me. This is the same child whom fortune, after a variety of the most surprising vicissitudes, at last made Queen of France.[1] Several gentlemen took different roads. The new king immediately set out for the camp of Charles XII, learning thus betimes to suffer disgrace, and forced to

[1] Maria Leszczynski, born in 1708, was married to Louis XV in 1725, and died in 1768.

quit his capital six weeks after he had been advanced to the sovereignty.

Augustus entered the capital like a provoked and victorious sovereign. The inhabitants, already fleeced by the King of Sweden, were entirely ruined by Augustus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederate lords, with all their effects both in town and country, were given to plunder. What was most extraordinary in this sudden revolution, the Pope's nuncio, who attended Augustus, demanded, in the name of his master, that the Bishop of Posnania should be delivered into his hands, as subject to the jurisdiction of the court of Rome, both as a bishop and as the favorer of a prince who had been advanced to the throne by the arms of a Lutheran.

The court of Rome, which has always been endeavoring to increase its temporal power by means of the spiritual, had, long before this, established a kind of jurisdiction in Poland, at the head of which was the Pope's nuncio. Its ministers never failed to avail themselves of every favorable opportunity to extend their power, which is revered by the multitude, but always contested by men of sense. They claimed a right of judging in all ecclesiastical causes; and in times of trouble had usurped several other privileges, in which they maintained themselves till about the year 1728, when these abuses were corrected,—abuses which are never reformed till they have become absolutely intolerable.

Augustus, glad of an opportunity of punishing the Bishop of Posnania in a decent manner, and willing to gratify the court of Rome, whose pretensions, however, he would have opposed on any other occasion, delivered the Polish prelate into the hands of the nuncio. The bishop, after having seen his house pillaged, was carried by the soldiers to the lodgings of the Italian minister, and from thence sent into Saxony, where he ended his days. Count Horn bore the continual fire of the enemy in the castle, where he was shut up, till at last, the place being no longer tenable, he surrendered himself with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage

which Augustus gained, amid the torrent of his bad fortune over the victorious arms of his enemy.

This last effort was the blaze of a fire that was just going out. His troops, which had been assembled in haste, consisted either of Poles, ready to forsake him on the first disgrace, or of Saxon recruits, who had never seen a campaign; or of vagabond Cossacks, more fit to distress the conquered than to conquer: and all of them trembled at the bare mention of the King of Sweden's name.

That conqueror, accompanied by Stanislaus, went in quest of his enemy, at the head of his best troops. The Saxon army fled everywhere before him. The towns for thirty miles around sent him the keys of their gates. Not a day passed that was not distinguished by some advantage. Success began to grow too familiar to Charles. He said it was rather like hunting than fighting, and complained that he was not obliged to purchase a victory on harder terms.

Augustus gave the command of his army, for some time, to Count Schulenburg, a very able general, and who had need of all his experience at the head of dispirited troops. He was more anxious to preserve his master's troops than to conquer. He acted by stratagem, and the two kings with vigor. He stole some marches upon them, took possession of some advantageous posts, sacrificed a few horse in order to give his infantry time to retire; and thus, by a glorious retreat, saved his troops in the face of an enemy, in contending with whom it was impossible, at that time, to acquire any other kind of glory.

He had scarcely arrived in the palatinate of Posnania, when he learned that the two kings, who, he imagined, were at the distance of fifty leagues, had marched these fifty leagues in nine hours. He had only eight thousand foot, and a thousand horse; and yet, with his handful of men, he was obliged to make head against a superior army, against the name of the King of Sweden, and against that terror with which so many defeats had naturally inspired the Saxons. He had always affirmed, contrary to the opinion of the German generals, that infantry were able to resist cavalry in open field, even without

the assistance of chevaux-de-frise, and he this day ventured to put the matter to the test of experience, against the victorious cavalry commanded by two kings, and by the best Swedish generals. He took possession of such an advantageous post, that he could not possibly be surrounded. The soldiers of the first rank, armed with pikes and muskets, bent one knee upon the ground, and standing very close together, presented to the enemy's horse a kind of pointed rampart with pikes and bayonets; the second rank, inclining a little on the shoulders of the first, fired over their heads; and the third, standing upright, fired at the same time, from behind the other two. The Swedes, with their usual impetuosity, rushed upon the Saxons, who waited the assault without flinching: the discharge of the muskets, and the points of the pikes and bayonets, maddened the horses, and made them rear instead of advancing. By these means the attack of the Swedes was rendered disorderly, and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

Though he had received five wounds, he drew up his men in an oblong square, and in this form made an orderly retreat about midnight towards the small town of Gurau, three leagues distant from the field of battle. But he had hardly begun to breathe in this place, when the two kings suddenly appeared at his heels.

Beyond Gurau, towards the river Oder, lay a thick wood, by marching through which the Saxon general saved his fatigued infantry. The Swedes, who were not to be checked by such a trivial interruption, pursued them even through the wood, advancing with great difficulty through paths hardly passable by foot-travellers; and the Saxons had not crossed the wood above five hours before the Swedish horse. On the other side of the wood runs the river Bartsch, hard by a village called Rutzen. Schulenburg had taken care to send orders for having the boats in readiness; and he now transported his troops, which were diminished by one half. Charles arrived the very moment that Schulenburg reached the opposite bank. Never conqueror pursued his enemy with greater celerity. The reputation of Schulenburg depended upon his escaping from

the King of Sweden: the king, on the other hand, thought his glory concerned in taking Schulenburg, and the remains of his army. He lost not a moment, but immediately caused his cavalry to cross at a ford. And thus the Saxons found themselves shut up between the river of Parts, and the greater river of Oder, which takes its rise in Silesia, and at this place is very deep and rapid.

Though the destruction of Schulenburg seemed to be inevitable, yet with the loss of a few soldiers he passed the Oder in the night. Thus he saved his army, and Charles could not help saying, "Schulenburg has conquered us to-day."

This is the same Schulenburg who was afterwards general of the Venetians, and to whom the republic erected a statue in Corfu, for having defended that bulwark of Italy against the Turks. Such honors are conferred by republics only; kings give nothing but rewards.

But what contributed so much to the glory of Schulenburg was of no service to King Augustus, who once more abandoned Poland to his enemies, retired into Saxony, and instantly repaired the fortifications of Dresden, being already afraid, and not without reason, for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Charles XII now beheld Poland reduced to subjection. His generals, after his example, had beaten in Courland several small bodies of the Muscovites, who ever since the battle of Narva had appeared only in small companies, and made war in those parts like the vagrant Tartars, who pillage, fly, and then reappear in order to fly again.

Wherever the Swedes came, they thought themselves sure of victory, when they were only twenty to a hundred. At this happy conjuncture, Stanislaus prepared for his coronation. Fortune, to which he owed his election at Warsaw, and his expulsion from thence, now recalled him thither, amid the acclamations of a numerous nobility, attached to him by the fate of war. A diet was immediately convoked, where all obstacles were removed, except such as were raised by the court of Rome, which alone endeavored to traverse the project.

It was natural for Rome to declare in favor of Augustus,

who from a Protestant had become a Catholic, in order to mount the throne of Poland, and to oppose Stanislaus, who had been placed upon the same throne by the great enemy of the Catholic religion. Clement XI, the then Pope, sent briefs to all the prelates of Poland, and particularly to the cardinal-primate, threatening them with excommunication, if they presumed to assist at the consecration of Stanislaus, or attempt any thing against the rights of Augustus.

Should these briefs be delivered to the bishops, who were at Warsaw, it was believed that some of them would be weak enough to obey them, and that the majority would avail themselves of this pretext to become more troublesome in proportion as they were more necessary. Every possible precaution was therefore taken to prevent these letters of the Pope from being admitted into Warsaw. But a Franciscan received briefs secretly, promising to deliver them into the bishop's own hands. He presently gave one to the suffragan of Chelm. This prelate, who was strongly attached to Stanislaus, carried it to the king unopened. The king sent for the monk, and asked him how he durst undertake to deliver a writing of that nature. The Franciscan answered, that he did it by order of his general. Stanislaus desired him for the future to pay a greater regard to the orders of his king than to those of the general of the Franciscans, and forthwith banished him the city.

The same day a placard was published by the King of Sweden, forbidding, under the most severe penalties, all the ecclesiastics in Warsaw, both secular and regular, to interfere in affairs of state; and, for the greater security, he caused guards to be placed at the gates of all the prelates, and forbade any stranger to enter the city. These little severities he took upon himself, in order to prevent any rupture between the clergy and Stanislaus at his accession to the throne. He said he relaxed himself from the fatigues of war in giving a check to the intrigues of the Romish court, and that he must fight against it with paper, whereas he was obliged to attack other sovereigns with real arms.

The cardinal-primate was solicited by Charles and Stanislaus to come and perform the ceremony of the coronation. He did not think himself obliged to leave Dantzic, and tc consecrate a king who had been chosen against his will. But as it was his maxim never to do any thing without a pretext, he resolved to provide a lawful excuse for his refusal. He caused the Pope's brief to be fixed in the night-time to the gate of his own house. The magistrates of Dantzic took fire at this indignity, and caused strict search to be made for the authors, who, nevertheless, could not be found. The primate affected to be highly incensed, but in reality was very well pleased, as it furnished him with a reason for refusing to consecrate the new king; and thus at one and the same time he kept fair with Charles XII, Augustus, Stanislaus, and the Pope. He died a few days after, leaving his country involved in confusion, and having reaped no other fruit from all his intrigues but that of embroiling himself with the three kings, Charles, Augustus, and Stanislaus, and with the republic and the Pope, who had ordered him to repair to Rome to give an account of his conduct. But, as even politicians are sometimes touched with remorse in their last moments, he wrote to King Augustus on his death-bed, and begged his pardon.

The consecration was performed with equal tranquillity and magnificence on the 4th of October, 1705, in the city of Warsaw, notwithstanding the usual custom of the Poles of crowning the kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Leszczynski and his wife, Charlotta Opalinska, were consecrated king and queen of Poland by the hands of the Archbishop of Lemberg, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII saw the ceremony incognito, the only advantage he reaped from his conquests.

While he was thus giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark durst not disturb him; while the King of Prussia courted his friendship, and Augustus had retired to his hereditary dominions, the czar was every day becoming more and more formidable. Though he had given but little assistance to Augustus in Poland, he had nevertheless made powerful diversions in Ingria.

He now began to grow not only a good soldier himself, but likewise instructed his subjects in the art of war. Discipline was established among his troops. He had good engineers, and well-served artillery, and several good officers; and he understood the great secret of subsisting his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and, as occasion required, to decline fighting; and he had besides formed a respectable navy, capable of making head against the Swedes in the Baltic.

Strengthened by all these advantages, which were entirely owing to his own genius, and by the absence of the King of Sweden, he took Narva by assault on the twenty-first of August, 1704, after a regular siege, during which he had prevented its receiving any succors either by sea or land. The soldiers were no sooner masters of the city, than they ran to pillage, and abandoned themselves to the most enormous barbarities. The czar flew from place to place, to stop the disorder and carnage. He snatched the women from the hands of the soldiers, who, after having ravished them, were going to cut their throats. He was even obliged to kill some Muscovites who did not obey his orders. They still show you, in the town-house of Narva, the table upon which he laid his sword as he entered, and repeat the words which he spoke to the citizens, who were there assembled: "It is not with the blood of the inhabitants that this sword is stained, but with that of the Muscovites, which I have shed to save your lives."

Had the czar always observed these humane maxims, he would have been the greatest man in the world. He aspired to a nobler character than that of a destroyer of towns. He was, at that time, laying the foundation of a city not far from Narva, in the middle of his new conquests. This was the city of Petersburg, which he afterwards made the place of his residence and the centre of his trade. It is situated between Finland and Ingria, on a marshy island, around which the Neva divides itself into several branches before it falls into the Gulf of Finland. With his own hands he drew the plan of the city, the fortress, and the harbor—the quays which embellished

it, and the forts which defended its entrance. This desert and uncultivated island, which, during the short summer in those climates, was only a heap of mud, and in winter a frozen pool, into which there was no entry by land but through pathless forests and deep morasses, and which had hitherto been the haunt of wolves and bears, was filled in 1703 with above three hundred thousand men, whom the czar had brought thither from his other dominions. The peasants of the kingdom of Astrakhan, and those who inhabit the frontiers of China, were transported to Petersburg. He was obliged to clear forests, to make roads, to drain marshes, and to raise banks, before he could lay the foundation of the city. The whole was a force put upon nature. The czar was determined to people a country which did not seem designed for the habitation of men. Neither the inundation which razed his works, nor the sterility of the soil, nor the ignorance of the workmen, nor even the mortality which carried off about two hundred thousand men in the beginning of the undertaking, could divert him from his firm resolution. The town was founded amid the obstacles which nature, the genius of the people, and an unsuccessful war, conspired to raise against it. Petersburg had become a city in 1705, and its harbor was filled with ships. The emperor, by a proper distribution of favors, drew many strangers thither,—bestowing lands upon some, houses upon others, and encouraging all the artists that came to civilize this barbarous climate. Above all, he had rendered it proof against the utmost effort of his enemies. The Swedish generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were never able to hurt his infant colony. It enjoyed a profound tranquillity in the midst of the war with which it was surrounded.

While the czar was thus creating, as it were, new dominions to himself, he still held out a helping hand to Augustus, who was losing his. He persuaded him, by means of General Patkul, who had lately entered into the service of Muscovy, and was then the czar's ambassador in Saxony, to come to Grodno to confer with him once more on the unhappy situation of his affairs. Thither Augustus repaired with some troops, and

accompanied by General Schulenburg, who had now become famous over all the North for his passage across the Oder, and in whom the king reposed his last hopes. The czar arrived at the same place, followed by an army of seventy thousand men. The two monarchs concerted new measures for carrying on the war. Augustus, being now dethroned, was no longer afraid of provoking the Poles, by abandoning their country to the Muscovite troops. It was resolved that the army of the czar should be divided into several bodies, to check the progress of the King of Sweden at every step. It was at this time that Augustus renewed the order of the White Eagle, a weak expedient for attaching to his interest some Polish lords, who were more desirous of real advantages than of an empty honor, which becomes ridiculous when it is held of a prince possessed of nothing but the name of king. The conference of the two kings ended in a very extraordinary manner. The czar departed suddenly, left his troops to his ally, and went to extinguish a rebellion with which he was threatened in Astrakhan. Immediately after his departure, Augustus ordered Patkul to be arrested at Dresden. All Europe was surprised at his conduct in presuming, contrary to the law of nations, and even, in appearance, to his own interest, to imprison the ambassador of the only prince from whom he could expect any assistance.

The secret spring of this transaction, as I had the honor to be informed by Marshal Saxe, son of King Augustus, was as follows: Patkul, proscribed in Sweden for having defended the privileges of Livonia, his native country, had been general to Augustus; but his high and lofty spirit being unable to brook the haughty behavior of General Flemming, the king's favorite, more imperious and lofty than himself, he had passed into the service of the czar, whose general he then was, and his ambassador at the court of Augustus. Endowed as he was with a penetrating genius, he had observed that Flemming and the Chancellor of Saxony intended to purchase a peace from the King of Sweden at any price. He forthwith formed a design to anticipate them, and to effect an accommodation between the czar and Sweden. The chancellor discovered his project,

and obtained leave to seize him. Augustus told the czar that Patkul was a perfidious wretch, and would betray them both. And yet he was no further culpable than in having served his new master too well; but an ill-timed piece of service frequently meets with the punishment due to treason.

Meanwhile, the sixty thousand Russians, divided into several small bodies, were burning and ravaging the lands of Stanislaus' adherents, on one side; and, on the other, Schulenburg was advancing with fresh troops. The fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII and Stanislaus attacked the separate bodies of the Muscovites, one after another, and with so much vigor and dispatch, that one Muscovite general was beaten before he heard of the defeat of his companion.

Nothing could stop the progress of the conqueror. If a river intervened between him and the enemy, Charles XII and his Swedes swam across it. A party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus, in which were found two hundred thousand crowns of silver. Stanislaus seized eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to Prince Mentchikof, the Russian general. Charles, at the head of his cavalry, marched thirty leagues in four-and-twenty hours,—every soldier leading a horse in his hand to mount when his own was weary. The Muscovites, struck with terror, and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the Borysthenes.

While Charles was driving the Muscovites before him into the heart of Lithuania, Schulenburg at last repassed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the Grand Marshal Rehnskiöld, who was reckoned the best general that Charles had, and was called the Parmenion of this Alexander of the North. These two illustrious generals, who seemed to share the fate of their masters, met near Punitz, in a place called Fraustadt, a spot already fatal to the troops of Augustus. Rehnskiöld had only thirteen battalions, and two-and-twenty squadrons, amounting in all to about ten thousand men. Schulenburg had double that number. It is worthy of remark, that there was in his army a body of six or seven

thousand Muscovites, who had been long disciplined, and were esteemed good soldiers. The battle of Fraustadt was fought on the twelfth of February, 1706. But this very General Schulenburg, who, with four-and-twenty thousand men, had, in some measure, baffled the good fortune of the King of Sweden, sunk under that of Rehnskiöld. The combat did not last a quarter of an hour; the Saxons made no resistance, and the Muscovites threw down their arms the moment they saw the Swedes. The panic was so sudden, and the confusion so great, that the conquerors found on the field of battle seven thousand loaded muskets, which the enemy had thrown away without firing. No defeat was ever more sudden, more complete, or more disgraceful; and yet no general ever made a finer disposition of his troops than Schulenburg, even by the confession of the Saxon and Swedish generals themselves, who this day saw how little human prudence is able to command events.

Among the prisoners there was an entire regiment of Frenchmen. These unhappy men had been taken by the Saxons in 1704, at the famous battle of Hochstädt, so fatal to the grandeur of Louis XIV. They had afterwards passed into the service of Augustus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, the command of which he had given to a Frenchman of the family of Joyeuse. The colonel was killed at the first, or rather the only charge of the Swedes; and the whole regiment were made prisoners of war. That very day the French begged to be admitted into the service of Charles XII, into which they were accordingly received by a strange caprice of fortune, which reserved them once more to change their master and their conqueror.

With regard to the Muscovites, they begged their lives on their knees; but the Swedes cruelly put them to death above six hours after the battle, in order to revenge on them the outrages which their countrymen had committed, and to rid their hands of those prisoners whom they did not know how to dispose of.

Augustus now saw himself deprived of all resources. He had nothing left at Cracow, where he was shut up with two

regiments of Muscovites, two of Saxons, and some troops of the army of the crown, by whom he was even afraid of being delivered up to the conqueror; but his misfortunes were completed when he heard that Charles XII had at last entered Saxony, on the first of September, 1706.

He had marched through Silesia, without so much as deigning to apprise the court of Vienna of his motions. Germany was struck with consternation. The diet of Ratisbon, which represents the empire, and whose resolutions are frequently as ineffectual as they are solemn, declared the King of Sweden an enemy of the empire, if he should pass the Oder with his army; a step which only determined him to march the sooner into Germany.

At his approach the villages were deserted, and the inhabitants fled on all sides. Charles behaved in the same manner as he had done at Copenhagen; he caused a declaration to be fixed up in all public places, importing "that his only intention in coming was to procure peace; that all those who should return home and pay the contributions he demanded, should be treated as his own subjects, and the rest punished without mercy." This declaration from a prince who was never known to break his word, made all those who had fled through fear, return home. He pitched his camp at Altranstädt, near the plain of Lützen, a field famous for the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. He went to see the place where that great man fell. When he reached the spot, "I have endeavored," said he, "to live like him; God, perhaps, will one day grant me as glorious a death."

From this camp he sent orders to the States of Saxony to assemble, and to transmit to him, without delay, the registers of the electoral finances. As soon as he got them in his power, and was exactly informed how much Saxony could supply, he taxed it at six hundred and twenty five thousand rix-dollars a month. Over and above this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furnish every Swedish soldier with two pounds of flesh, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and four pence a day, with forage for the horse. The contributions being thus

regulated, the king established a new police, to protect the Saxons from the insults of his soldiers. In all the towns where he placed garrisons, he ordered the innkeepers, in whose houses the soldiers were quartered, to deliver every month certificates of their behavior, without which the soldiers were to have no pay. Besides, inspectors were appointed, who, once in every fifteen days, went from house to house to make inquiry whether the Swedes had committed any outrage; in which case, care was taken to indemnify the innkeepers, and to punish the delinquents.

It is well known under what severe discipline the troops of Charles XII were kept; that they never plundered the towns which they took by assault till they had received permission; and that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left off at the first signal. The Swedes pique themselves to this day on the strict discipline which they observed in Saxony; and yet the Saxons complain of the terrible ravages they committed; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, did we not know in what very different lights the same objects appear to different men. It could hardly happen but that the conquerors must have sometimes abused their rights; and the conquered have taken the slightest injuries for the most enormous outrages. One day as the king was taking the air on horseback, in the neighborhood of Leipsic, a Saxon peasant threw himself at his feet, begging he would do him justice on a grenadier, who had just taken from him what was designed for his family's dinner. The king ordered the soldier to be brought before him. "And is it true," said he, with a stern countenance, "that you have robbed this man?". "Sir," said the soldier, "I have not done him so much harm as you have done to his master; you have taken a kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow." The king gave the peasant ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the wit and boldness of the reply; adding, "Remember, friend, that if I have taken a kingdom from Augustus, I have kept nothing to myself."

The great fair of Leipsic was held as usual. The merchants

came thither in perfect security. Not one Swedish soldier was to be seen at the fair. One would have said that the army of the King of Sweden was in Saxony for no other reason than to watch over the safety of the country. He commanded throughout all the electorate with a power as absolute, and a tranquillity as profound, as if he had been in Stockholm.

Augustus, wandering up and down Poland, and deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII, in which he humbly sued for peace. This letter he sent secretly by Baron Imhof and M. Fingsten, referendary of the privy council, to which two gentlemen he gave full power, and a blank signed: "Go, and endeavor to procure me reasonable and Christian conditions." He was obliged, however, to conceal these overtures, and to decline the mediation of any prince; for, being then in Poland, at the mercy of the Muscovites, he had reason to fear that that dangerous ally, whom he was now going to abandon, would punish him for his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came to Charles's camp in the night-time, and had a private audience. The king having read the letter, told them they should have his answer in a moment; and accordingly, retiring to his closet, he wrote as follows:

"I consent to give peace on the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I will ever make the least alteration.

"I. That Augustus renounce the crown of Poland forever; that he acknowledge Stanislaus as lawful king; and that he promises never to remount the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

"II. That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly those he has made with Muscovy.

"III. That he send back to my camp, in an honorable manner, the Princes Sobieski, and all the prisoners he has taken.

"IV. That he deliver into my hands all the deserters that have entered into his service, and particularly John Patkul; and that he stop all proceedings against such as have passed from his service into mine."

This paper he gave to Count Piper, with orders to transact the rest with the plenipotentiaries of Augustus. These gentlemen were shocked at the cruelty of the proposals; and used all the little arts that men without power can employ, to soften, if possible, the rigor of the King of Sweden. They had several conferences with Count Piper; but that minister answered all their arguments with this short reply: "Such is the will of the king, my master, and he never alters his resolution."

While these negotiations were going on in Saxony, fortune seemed to put Augustus in a condition to obtain more honorable terms, and of treating with his conqueror on a more equal footing.

Prince Mentchikof, generalissimo of the Muscovite army, brought into Poland a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when Augustus not only did not desire their assistance, but even feared it. He had with him some Polish and Saxon troops, making in all about six thousand men. Surrounded with this small body by the army of Prince Mentchikof, he had every thing to fear, in case the negotiation should be discovered. He saw himself at once dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being arrested by his ally. In this delicate conjuncture, one of the Swedish generals named Meyerfeldt, at the head of ten thousand men, appeared at Kalisch, near the palatinate of Posnania. Prince Mentchikof pressed Augustus to give them battle. The king, who was greatly embarrassed, delayed the engagement under various pretexts; for, though the enemy had but one third of his number, there were four thousand Swedes in Meyerfeldt's army, and that alone was sufficient to render the event doubtful. To give battle to the Swedes during the negotiation, and to lose it, was, in effect, to deepen the abyss in which he was already plunged. He therefore resolved to send a trusty servant to the general of the enemy, to give him some distant hints with regard to the peace, and advise him to retreat. But this advice produced an effect quite contrary to what he expected. General Meyerfeldt thought they were laying a snare to intimidate him; and for that reason resolved to hazard a battle.

The Russians, now for the first time, conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which Augustus gained almost against his will, was entire and complete. In the midst of his bad fortune, he entered triumphant into Warsaw, formerly his flourishing capital, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize upon this moment of prosperity to go and attack the King of Sweden, in Saxony, with the Muscovite army. But when he reflected that Charles XII was at the head of a Swedish army, hitherto invincible; that the Russians would abandon him on the first intelligence of the treaty he had begun; that his Saxon dominions, already drained of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Swedes and Muscovites; that the Empire, engaged in a war with France, could afford him no assistance; and that, in the end, he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he thought it most advisable to comply with the terms which the King of Sweden should impose. These terms became still more hard when Charles heard that Augustus had attacked his troops during the negotiation. His resentment, and the pleasure of further humbling an enemy who had just vanquished his forces, made him inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of Augustus served only to render his situation the more miserable; a thing which perhaps never happened to any but himself.

He had just caused *Te Deum* to be sung at Warsaw, when Fingsten, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony with the treaty of peace which deprived him of his crown. Augustus hesitated for a little, but at last signed it; and then set out for Saxony, vainly hoping that his presence would soften the King of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps remember the ancient alliances of their families, and the common blood that ran in both their veins.

These two princes met for the first time in Count Piper's tent, at a place called Gutersdorf, without any ceremony. Charles XII was in jack-boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck instead of a cravat; his clothes, as usual,

were of coarse blue cloth, with gilt-brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and upon the pummel of which he frequently leaned. The conversation turned wholly upon these jack-boots; Charles XII told Augustus that he had not laid them aside for these six years past, except when he went to bed. These trifles were the only subject of discourse between two kings, one of whom had deprived the other of a crown. Augustus, especially, spoke with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes, and men accustomed to the management of great affairs, know how to assume amid the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together two several times. Charles XII always affected to give Augustus the right hand; but, far from mitigating the rigor of his demands, he rendered them still more severe. It was certainly a very mortifying thing, for a sovereign to be forced to deliver up a general officer and a public minister. It was still a greater debasement to be obliged to send the jewels and archives of the crown to his successor Stanislaus. But what completed his degradation was his being at last compelled to congratulate, on his accession to the throne, the man who was going to usurp his place. Charles required Augustus to write a letter to Stanislaus. The dethroned king endeavored to evade the demand; but Charles insisted upon his writing the letter, and he was at last obliged to comply. Here follows an exact copy of it, which I have seen. It is transcribed from the original, which is still in the possession of King Stanislaus:

"SIR AND BROTHER:

"We little imagined it would have been necessary to enter into a literary correspondence with your majesty; nevertheless, in order to please his Swedish majesty, and to avoid the suspicion of our being unwilling to gratify his desire, we hereby congratulate you on your accession to the throne, and wish you may find in your native country more faithful subjects than we have left there. All the world will do us the justice to believe that we have received nothing but the most ungrate-

ful returns for our good offices, and that the greater part of our subjects seemed to have no other aim than to hasten our ruin. Wishing that you may never be exposed to the like misfortunes, we commit you to the protection of God.

"Your brother and neighbor,

"*Dresden, April* 8, 1707. AUGUSTUS, King."

Augustus was obliged to give orders to all his magistrates no longer to style him King of Poland, and to erase this title, which he now renounced, out of the public prayers. He was less averse to the releasing of the Sobieskis; but the sacrifice of Patkul was the severest of all. The czar, on the one hand, loudly demanded him back as his ambassador; and, on the other, the King of Sweden, with the most terrible menaces in case of a refusal, insisted that he should be delivered up to him. Patkul was then confined in the castle of Königstein, in Saxony. Augustus thought he might easily gratify Charles XII and save his own honor. He sent his guards to deliver this unhappy man to the Swedish troops; but he previously dispatched a secret order to the Governor of Königstein to let his prisoner escape. The bad fortune of Patkul defeated the pains that were taken to save him. The governor, knowing that Patkul was very rich, had a mind to make him purchase his liberty. The prisoner still relying on the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of Augustus, refused to pay for that which he thought he had a title to obtain for nothing. During this interval, the guards who were commissioned to seize the prisoner arrived, and immediately delivered him to four Swedish captains, who carried him forthwith to the general quarters at Altranstädt, where he remained for three months, tied to a stake with a heavy iron chain, and from thence was conducted to Casimir.

Charles XII, forgetting that Patkul was the czar's ambassador, and considering him only as his own subject, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmost rigor. He was condemned to be broken alive and quartered. A chaplain having come to inform him of the fatal sentence, without acquainting

him with the manner in which it was to be executed, Patkul, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself shut up with a priest, and his courage being no longer supported by glory or passion, the only sources of human intrepidity, poured out a flood of tears into the chaplain's bosom. He was affianced to a Saxon lady, called Madame von Einsiedel, a woman of birth, of merit, and of beauty, and whom he had intended to marry about the time that he was now condemned to die. He entreated the chaplain to wait upon her, to give her all the consolation he could, and to assure her that he died full of the most tender affection for his incomparable mistress. When he was brought to the place of punishment, and beheld the wheels and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions and threw himself into the arms of the minister, who embraced him, covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. Then a Swedish officer read aloud a paper to the following effect:

"This is to declare, that it is the express order of his majesty, our most merciful lord, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broken upon the wheel and quartered, in order to atone for his crimes and to be an example to others; that every one may beware of treason, and faithfully serve his king." At the words "most merciful prince," Patkul cried out, "What mercy?" and at those of "traitor to his country," "Alas!" said he, "I have served it but too well." He received sixteen blows, and suffered the longest and most excruciating tortures that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reinhold Patkul, ambassador and general of the Emperor of Russia.

Those that looked upon him only as a rebel, said that he deserved death; but those who considered him as a Livonian, born in a province that had privileges to defend, and remembered that he had been banished from Livonia for no other reason than his having defended those privileges, called him a martyr to the liberty of his country. But all agreed that the title of ambassador of the czar ought to have rendered his person sacred. The King of Sweden alone, brought up in the

principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had only performed an act of justice, while all Europe condemned his cruelty.

His mangled limbs remained exposed upon gibbets till 1713, when Augustus, having regained his throne, caused these testimonies of the necessity to which he was reduced at Altranstädt to be gathered together. They were brought to Warsaw in a box, and delivered to him in presence of the French envoy. The King of Poland, showing the box to this minister, only said, "These are the limbs of Patkul," without adding any thing, either to blame his conduct or to bewail his memory, and without any one daring to speak on so delicate and mournful a subject.

About this time, a Livonian called Paykul, an officer in the Saxon troops, who had been taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case, made it but too plain that Charles, in putting Patkul to such a cruel death, was more anxious to avenge himself than to punish the criminal. Be that as it may, Paykul, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate to impart to the king the secret of making gold, on condition that he should obtain his pardon. He made the experiment in prison, in presence of Colonel Hamilton and the magistrates of the town; and whether he had actually discovered some useful secret, or, what is more probable, had only acquired the art of deceiving with a plausible air, they carried the gold which was found in the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and gave the senate such a full and seemingly such an important account of the matter, that the queen-dowager, Charles's grand mother, ordered the execution to be suspended till the king should be informed of this uncommon affair, and should send his orders accordingly.

The king replied, "that he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the entreaties of his friends, and that he would never grant to interest what he had denied to friendship." This inflexibility had something in it very heroical in a prince,

especially as he thought the secret practicable. Augustus, upon hearing this story, said, "I am not surprised at the King of Sweden's indifference about the philosopher's stone; he has found it in Saxony."

When the czar was informed of the strange peace which Augustus had, notwithstanding their former treaties, concluded at Altranstädt, and that Patkul, his ambassador-plenipotentiary, was delivered up to the King of Sweden, in contempt of the law of nations, he loudly complained of these indignities to the courts of Europe. He wrote to the Emperor of Germany, to the Queen of England, and to the States-General of the United Provinces. He gave the terms of cowardice and treachery to the sad necessity to which Augustus had been obliged to submit. He conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation to procure the restoration of his ambassador, and to prevent the affront, which, in his person, was going to be offered to all crowned heads. He pressed them, by the motive of honor, not to demean themselves so far as to become guarantees of the treaty of Altranstädt—a concession which Charles XII meant to extort from them by his threatening and imperious behavior. These letters had no other effect than to set the power of the King of Sweden in a stronger light. The Emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a destructive war against France, and thought it a very unseasonable juncture to exasperate Charles XII by refusing the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. With regard to the unhappy Patkul, there was not a single power that interposed its good offices in his behalf; from whence it appears what little confidence a subject ought to put in princes, and how much all the European powers at that time stood in awe of the King of Sweden.

It was proposed in the czar's council to retaliate on the Swedish officers who were prisoners at Moscow; but the czar would not consent to a barbarity which would have been attended with fatal consequences, as there were more Muscovites prisoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Muscovy.

He resolved to take a more advantageous revenge The main

body of his enemy's army lay idle in Saxony. Löwenhaupt [Levenhaupt], the King of Sweden's general, who was left in Poland with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes into a country without forts, and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles XII. The Emperor of Muscovy seized this opportunity, and re-entered Poland with above 60,000 men. These he divided into several bodies, and marched with a flying camp to Lemburg, where there was no Swedish garrison. All the towns of Poland yielded to any one who appear before their gates at the head of an army. He caused an assembly to be convoked at Lemburg, of much the same nature with that which had dethroned Augustus at Warsaw.

At that time Poland had two primates as well as two kings, the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate nominated by Augustus summoned the assembly of Lemberg, to which resorted all those whom that prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranstädt, and those that the czar's money had gained. Here it was proposed to elect a new sovereign; so that Poland was almost upon the point of having three kings at once, without being able to say which was the real one.

During the conferences at Lemberg, the czar, whose interest was closely connected with that of the Emperor of Germany, on account of the common dread which they both entertained of the power of the King of Sweden, secretly obtained from him a number of German officers; who daily arriving, increased his strength in a considerable degree, by bringing along with them discipline and experience. These he engaged in his service by several instances of liberality; and the more to encourage his own troops, he gave his picture set round with diamonds to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Kalisch: the subaltern officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory at Kalisch were all struck in the new city of Petersburg, where the improvement of the arts kept pace with the desire of glory and spirit of emulation which the czar had infused into his troops.

The confusion, the multiplicity of factions, and the continual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the diet of Lemberg from coming to any resolution. The czar transferred it to Lublin; but the change of place did not lessen the disorder and perplexity in which the whole nation was involved. The assembly contented themselves with declaring, that they neither acknowledged Augustus who had abdicated the throne, nor Stanislaus who had been elected against their will; but they were neither sufficiently united, nor had resolution enough to nominate another king. During these fruitless deliberations, the party of the Princes Sapieha, that of Oginski, those who secretly adhered to Augustus, and the new subjects of Stanislaus, all made war upon one another, and, by pillaging each other's estates, completed the ruin of their country. The Swedish troops, commanded by Löwenhaupt, one part of which lay in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in pursuit of the Russians, and set fire to every thing that opposed Stanislaus. The Russians ruined their friends and foes without distinction; and nothing was to be seen but towns reduced to ashes, and wandering troops of Poles, deprived of all their substance, and detesting alike their two kings, the czar, and Charles XII.

To quell these commotions, and to secure the possession of the throne, Stanislaus set out from Altranstädt on the fifteenth of July, 1707, accompanied by General Rehnskiöld, and sixteen Swedish regiments, and furnished with a large sum of money. He was acknowledged wherever he came. The strict discipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Muscovites to be more sensibly felt, conciliated the affections of the people. His extreme affability, in proportion as it was better known, reconciled to him almost all the different factions; and his money procured him the greatest part of the army of the crown. The czar, apprehensive of wanting provisions in a country which his troops had laid waste, retired into Lithuania, where he had fixed the general rendezvous of his army, and where he resolved to establish magazines. This retreat left Stanislaus the undisturbed sovereign of the greater part of Poland.

The only person that gave him any uneasiness, was Count Siniawski, grand general of the crown, by the nomination of Augustus. This man, who was possessed of no contemptible talents, and entertained the most ambitious views, was at the head of a third party. He neither acknowledged Augustus nor Stanislaus; and after having used his utmost efforts in order to procure his own election, he contented himself with being the head of a party, since he could not be king. The troops of the crown, which continued under his command, had no other pay but the liberty of pillaging their fellow-subjects with impunity. And all those who had either suffered, or were apprehensive of suffering, from the rapacity of these freebooters, soon submitted to Stanislaus, whose power was gathering strength every day.

The King of Sweden was then receiving, in his camp at Altranstädt, ambassadors from almost all the princes in Christendom. Some entreated him to quit the empire, others desired him to turn his arms against the emperor; and it was then the general report, that he intended to join with France, in humbling the house of Austria. Among these ambassadors was the famous John, duke of Marlborough, sent by Anne, queen of Great Britain. This man, who never besieged a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in Parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the most noble negotiator of his time. He did France as much mischief by his politics as by his arms. M. Fagel, secretary of the States-General, and a man of great merit, has been heard to say, that when the States-General had more than once resolved to oppose the schemes which the duke was about to lay before them, the duke came, spoke to them in French, a language in which he expressed himself but very indifferently, and brought them all over to his opinion. This account I had from Lord Bolingbroke.

In conjunction with Prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius, the grand-pensionary of Holland, he supported the whole weight of the war which the allies waged

against France. He knew that Charles was incensed against the Empire and the Emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the French; and that if this conqueror should espouse the cause of Louis XIV, the allies must be entirely ruined.

True it is, Charles had given his word in 1700, that he would not intermeddle in the quarrel between Louis XIV and the allies; but the Duke of Marlborough could not believe that any prince would be so great a slave to his word as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He therefore set out from the Hague, with a resolution to sound the intentions of the King of Sweden. Fabricius, who then attended upon Charles XII, assured me that the Duke of Marlborough, on his arrival, applied secretly, not to Count Piper, the prime minister, but to Baron Görtz, who now began to share with Piper the confidence of the king. He even went to the quarters of Charles XII in the coach of this gentleman, between whom and the Chancellor Piper, together with Robinson, the English minister, he spoke to the king in French. He told him that he should esteem it a singular happiness could he have an opportunity of learning, under his command, such parts of the art of war as he did not yet understand. To this polite compliment the king made no return, and seemed to forget that it was Marlborough who was speaking to him. He even thought, as I have been credibly informed, that the dress of this great man was too fine and costly, and that his air had in it too little of a soldier. The conversation was tedious and general—Charles XII speaking in the Swedish tongue, and Robinson serving as an interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in haste to make proposals, and who, by a long course of experience, had learned the art of diving into the real characters of men, and discovering the connection between their most secret thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, regarded the king with the utmost attention. When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his majesty a natural aversion to France; and remarked that he talked with pleasure of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the czar to him, and observed that his eyes

always kindled at the name, notwithstanding the calmness of the conversation. Besides, he saw a map of Muscovy lying before him upon the table. He wanted no more to convince him that the real design and the sole ambition of the King of Sweden was to dethrone the czar, as he had already done the King of Poland. He was sensible that if Charles remained in Saxony, it was only to impose some hard conditions on the Emperor of Germany. He knew the emperor would make no resistance, and that thus all disputes would be easily accommodated. He left Charles XII to follow the bent of his own mind; and satisfied with having discovered his intentions, he made him no proposals. These particulars I had from the Duchess of Marlborough, his widow, who is still alive.[1]

As few negotiations are finished without money, and as ministers are sometimes seen to sell the hatred or favor of their masters, it was the general opinion throughout all Europe, that the Duke of Marlborough would not have succeeded so well with the King of Sweden had he not made a handsome present to Count Piper, whose memory still labors under the imputation. For my own part, after having traced this report to its source, with all the care and accuracy of which I am master, I have found that Piper received a small present from the emperor, by the hands of the Count Wratislau, with the consent of his master, and not a farthing from the Duke of Marlborough. Certain it is, Charles was so firmly resolved to dethrone the Emperor of Russia, that he asked nobody's advice on that subject, nor needed the instigation of Count Piper to prompt him to wreak his long-meditated vengeance on the head of Peter Alexiovitch.

But what vindicates the character of that minister beyond all probability and cavil, was the honor which, long after this period, was paid to his memory by Charles XII, who having heard that Piper was dead in Russia, caused his corpse to be

[1] The author wrote in 1727, since which time, as appears from other dates, the work has undergone several corrections.

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transported to Stockholm, and gave him a magnificent funeral at his own expense.

The king, who had not as yet experienced any reverse of fortune, nor even met with any interruption in his victories, thought one year would be sufficient for dethroning the czar; after which, he imagined he might return in peace, and erect himself into the arbiter of Europe. But, first of all, he resolved to humble the Emperor of Germany.

Baron Stralheim, the Swedish envoy at Vienna, had had a quarrel at a public entertainment with Count Zobor, chamberlain of the emperor. The latter having refused to drink the health of Charles XII, and having bluntly declared that that prince had used his master ill, Stralheim gave him at once the lie and a box on the ear, and, besides this insult, boldly demanded a reparation from the imperial court. The emperor, afraid of displeasing the King of Sweden, was obliged to banish his subject, whom he ought rather to have avenged. Charles, not satisfied even with this condescension, insisted that Count Zobor should be delivered up to him. The pride of the court of Vienna was forced to stoop. The count was put into the hands of the king, who sent him back, after having kept him for some time as a prisoner at Stettin.

He further demanded, contrary to all the laws of nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unhappy Muscovites, who, having escaped the fury of his arms, had fled for refuge into the Empire. The emperor was obliged to yield even to this unreasonable demand; and had not the Russian envoy at Vienna given these unhappy wretches an opportunity of escaping by different roads, they must have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

The third and last of his demands was the most daring. He declared himself the protector of the emperor's Protestant subjects in Silesia, a province belonging to the house of Austria, and not to the Empire. He insisted that the emperor should grant them the liberties and privileges which had been established by the treaties of Westphalia, but which were extinguished, or at least eluded, by those of Ryswyk. The em-

peror, who wanted only to get rid of such a dangerous neighbor, yielded once more, and granted all that he desired. The Lutherans of Silesia had above one hundred churches, which the Catholics were obliged to cede to them by this treaty; but of these advantages, which were now procured them by the King of Sweden's good fortune, they were afterwards deprived, when that prince was no longer in a condition to impose laws.

The emperor who made these forced concessions, and complied in every thing with the will of Charles XII, was called Joseph; and was the eldest son of Leopold, and brother of Charles VI, who succeeded him. The Pope's inter-nuncio, who then resided at the court of Joseph, reproached him in very severe terms, alleging that it was a most shameful condescension for a Catholic emperor like him, to sacrifice the interest of his own religion to that of heretics. "You may think yourself very happy," replied the emperor, with a smile, "that the King of Sweden did not propose to make me a Lutheran; for if he had, I do not know what I might have done."

Count Wratislau, his ambassador to Charles XII, brought to Leipsic the treaty in favor of the Silesians, signed with his master's hand; upon which Charles said he was the emperor's very good friend. He was far from being pleased, however, with the court of Rome, which had employed all its arts and intrigues, in order to traverse his scheme. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court, which, having one half of Europe for its irreconcilable enemy, and placing no confidence in the other, can only support its credit by the dexterity of its negotiations; and he therefore resolved to be revenged on his holiness. He told Count Wratislau, that the Swedes had formerly subdued Rome, and had not degenerated like her. He sent the Pope word, that he would one day re-demand the effects which Queen Christina had left at Rome. It is hard to say how far this young conqueror might have carried his resentment and his arms, had fortune favored his designs. At that time nothing appeared impossible to him. He had even sent several officers privately into

Asia and Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and to examine into the strength of those countries. Certain it is, that if ever prince was able to overturn the empire of the Turks and Persians, and from thence pass into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as brave, as enterprising, more indefatigable, more robust, and more temperate; and the Swedes, perhaps, were better soldiers than the Macedonians. But such projects, which are called divine when they succeed, are regarded only as chimeras when they prove abortive.

At last, having removed every difficulty, and accomplished all his designs; having humbled the emperor, given laws in the Empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of the Catholics, dethroned one king, crowned another, and rendered himself the terror of all the princes around him, he began to prepare for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had not made the least alteration in his manner of living. He mounted his horse thrice a day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself with his own hands, drank no wine, sat at table only a quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes were still uncertain whither their king intended to lead them. They had only some slight suspicion that he meant to go to Moscow. A few days before his departure, he ordered the grand marshal of his household to give him in writing the route from Leipsic— . . At that word he paused a moment; and lest the marshal should discover his project, he added with a smile—To all the capital cities of Europe. The marshal brought him a list of all these routes, at the head of which he placed, in great letters, "The route from Leipsic to Stockholm." The generality of the Swedes were extremely desirous of returning home; but the king was far from the thoughts of carrying them back to their native country. "Marshal," said he, "I plainly see whither you would lead me; but we shall not return to Stockholm so soon."

The army was already on its march, and was passing by Dresden. Charles was at the head of his men, always riding,

as usual, two or three hundred paces before his guards. All of a sudden he vanished from their sight. Some officers advanced at full gallop to see where he was. They ran in all directions, but could not find him. In a moment the alarm spread over the whole army. The troops were ordered to halt; the generals assembled together, and were already in the utmost consternation. At last they learned from a Saxon, who was passing by, what had become of the king.

As he was passing so near Dresden, he took it into his head to pay a visit to Augustus. He entered the town on horseback, followed by three or four general officers. The sentries at the gates asked them their names. Charles said his name was Karl, and that he was a Draban; and all the rest took fictitious names. Count Flemming, seeing them pass through the town, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could possibly be done on such an occasion immediately presented itself to the mind of that minister, who laid it before Augustus. But Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Augustus had time to recover from his surprise. Augustus was then sick, and in his night-gown; but dressed himself in a hurry. Charles breakfasted with him, as a traveller who comes to take leave of his friend; and then expressed his desire of viewing the fortifications. During the short time he employed in walking around them, a Livonian who had been condemned in Sweden, and now served in the Saxon army, imagining that he could never find a more favorable opportunity of obtaining his pardon, entreated Augustus to ask it of Charles, being fully convinced that his majesty would not refuse so small a favor to a prince from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he now was. Augustus readily undertook the charge. He was then at some distance from the king, and was conversing with Hord, a Swedish general. "I believe," said he smiling, "your master will not refuse me." "You do not know him," replied General Hord; "he will rather refuse you here than anywhere else." Augustus, however, did not fail to prefer the petition in very pressing terms; and Charles refused it in such a manner as to prevent a repetition

of the request. After having passed some hours in this strange visit, he embraced Augustus, and departed. Upon rejoining his army, he found all his generals still in consternation. They told him they had determined to besiege Dresden, in case his majesty had been detained a prisoner. "Right," said the king, "they durst not." Next day, upon hearing the news that Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden, "You see," said Baron Stralheim, "they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday." A few days after, Rehnskiöld, coming to wait upon the king, expressed his surprise at this unaccountable visit to Augustus. "I confided," said Charles, "in my good fortune; but I have seen the moment that might have proved prejudicial to me. Flemming had no mind that I should leave Dresden so soon."

BOOK IV.

Charles quits Saxony in a victorious manner; pursues the Czar; and shuts himself up in the Ukraine. His losses; his wound. The battle of Pol tava. Consequences of that battle. Charles obliged to fly into Turkey. His reception in Bessarabia.

CHARLES at last took leave of Saxony, in September, 1707, followed by an army of forty-three thousand men, formerly covered with steel, but now shining with gold and silver, and enriched with the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money. Not only were all the regiments complete, but in every company there were several supernumeraries. Besides this army, Count Löwenhaupt, one of his best generals, waited for him in Poland with twenty thousand men. He had another army of fifteen thousand in Finland; and fresh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all these forces it was not doubted but that he would easily dethrone the czar.

That emperor was then in Lithuania, endeavoring to reanimate a party which Augustus seemed to have abandoned. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides at the first report of the King of Sweden's approach. He himself had enjoined his generals never to wait for the conqueror with unequal forces; and he was punctually obeyed.

The King of Sweden, in the midst of his victorious march, received an ambassador from the Turks. The ambassador had his audience in Count Piper's quarters, for it was always in that minister's tent that ceremonies of pomp were performed. On these occasions he supported the dignity of his master by an appearance which had in it something magnificent; and the king, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and

more plainly dressed than the meanest officer in his army, was wont to say that his palace was Piper's quarters. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with a hundred Swedish soldiers, who, having been taken by the Calmucks, and sold in Turkey, had been purchased by the Grand Seignior, and sent back by that emperor as the most acceptable present he could make to his majesty; not that the Ottoman pride condescended to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII, but because the sultan, the natural enemy of the Russian and German emperors, was willing to fortify himself against them by the friendship of Sweden and the alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his accession to the throne; so that this king was acknowledged by Germany, France, England, Spain, and Turkey. There remained only the Pope, who, before he would acknowledge him, resolved to wait till time should have settled on his head that crown of which a reverse of fortune might easily deprive it.

Charles had no sooner given audience to the ambassador of the Ottoman Porte, than he went in pursuit of the Muscovites. The Russians, in the course of the war, had quitted Poland and returned to it above twenty different times. That country, which is open on all sides, and has no places of strength to cut off the retreat of an army, gave the Muscovites an opportunity of sometimes revisiting the very spot where they had formerly been beaten, and even of penetrating as far into the heart of the kingdom as the conqueror himself. While Charles remained in Saxony, the czar had advanced as far as Lemberg, situated at the southern extremity of Poland. Charles was then at Grodno, in Lithuania, a hundred leagues to the northward of Lemberg.

He left Stanislaus in Poland to defend his new kingdom, with the assistance of ten thousand Swedes and that of his own subjects, against all his enemies, both foreign and domestic. He then put himself at the head of his cavalry, and marched amid frost and snow to Grodno, in the month of January, 1708.

He had already passed the Niemen, about two leagues from

the town, and the czar as yet knew nothing of his march. Upon the first news of the approach of the Swedish army, the czar quitted the town by the north gate, and Charles entered it by the south. Charles had only six hundred of his guards with him, the rest not being able to keep pace with his rapid march. The czar fled with above two thousand men, from an apprehension that a whole army was entering Grodno. That very day he was informed by a Polish deserter that he had abandoned the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the main body of the army was still at the distance of five leagues. He lost no time; he detached fifteen hundred horse of his own troops, in the evening, to surprise the King of Sweden in the town. This detachment, under favor of darkness, arrived undiscovered at the first Swedish guard, which, though consisting only of thirteen men, sustained for half a quarter of an hour the efforts of the whole fifteen hundred. The king, who happened to be at the other end of the town, flew to their assistance with the rest of his six hundred men; upon which the Russians fled with precipitation. In a short time his army arrived, and he then set out in pursuit of the enemy. All the corps of the Russian army, dispersed through Lithuania, retired hastily into the palatinate of Minsk, near the frontiers of Muscovy, where their general rendezvous was appointed. The Swedes, who were likewise divided into several bodies, continued to pursue the enemy for more than thirty leagues. The fugitives and the pursuers made forced marches almost every day, though in the middle of winter. For a long time past, all seasons of the year had become the same to Swedes and Russians; and the only difference between them now arose from the terror of Charles's arms.

From Grodno to the Borysthenes, eastward, there is nothing but morasses, deserts, and immense forests. In the cultivated spots there are no provisions to be had, the peasants burying under ground all their grain, and whatever else can be preserved in their subterranean receptacles. In order to discover these hidden magazines, the earth must be pierced with long poles pointed with iron. The Muscovites and the Swedes

alternately made use of these provisions; but they were not always to be found, and even then they were not sufficient.

The King of Sweden, who had foreseen these difficulties, had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, and nothing could stop him in his march. After having traversed the forest of Minsk, where he was every moment obliged to cut down trees in order to clear the road for his troops and baggage, he found himself, on the 25th of June, 1708, on the banks of the river Beresina, opposite to Borizof.

In that place the czar had assembled the best part of his forces, and intrenched himself to great advantage. His design was to hinder the Swedes from crossing the river. Charles posted some regiments on the banks of the Beresina, over against Borizof, as if he meant to attempt a passage in the face of the enemy. Meanwhile he led his army three leagues higher up the river, threw a bridge across it, cut his way through a body of three thousand men who defended that pass, and, without halting, marched against the main body of the enemy. The Russians did not wait his approach, but decamped and retreated towards the Borysthenes, spoiling all the roads, and destroying every thing in their way, in order, at least, to retard the progress of the Swedes.

Charles surmounted every obstacle, and still advanced towards the Borysthenes. In his way he met with twenty thousand Muscovites, intrenched in a place called Holowczyn, behind a morass, which could not be approached without passing a river. Charles did not delay the attack till the rest of his infantry should arrive. He plunged into the water at the head of his foot-guards, and crossed the river and the morass, the water frequently reaching above his shoulders. While he was thus pressing forward to the enemy, he ordered his cavalry to go round the morass and take them in flank. The Muscovites, surprised that no barrier could defend them, were instantly routed by the king, who attacked them on foot, and by the Swedish cavalry.

The horse, having forced their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midst of the battle. He then mounted

on horseback; but some time after, observing in the field a young Swedish gentleman, named Gyllenstiern, for whom he had a great regard, wounded and unable to walk, he forced him to take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this was perhaps the most glorious; this was the one in which he encountered the greatest dangers, and displayed the most consummate skill and prudence. The memory of it is still preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side—*Sylvæ, paludes, aggeres, nostes victi;* and on the other this verse of Lucan—*Victrices copias alium laturus in orbem.*

The Russians, chased from all their posts, repassed the Borysthenes, which divides Poland from Muscovy. Charles did not give over the pursuit, but followed them across the Borysthenes, which he passed at Mohilev, the last town of Poland, and which sometimes belongs to the Poles, and sometimes to the Russians—a fate common to frontier places.

The czar thus seeing his empire, where he had lately established the fine arts and a flourishing trade, exposed to a war, which, in a short time, might overturn all his mighty projects, and perhaps deprive him of his crown, began to think seriously of peace; and accordingly ventured to make some proposals for that purpose, by means of a Polish gentleman, whom he sent to the Swedish army. Charles XII, who had not been used to grant peace to his enemies, except in their own capitals, replied, "I will treat with the czar at Moscow." When this haughty answer was reported to the czar, "My brother Charles," said he, "always affects to act the Alexander; but, I flatter myself, he will not find in me another Darius."

From Mohilev, the place where the king passed the Borysthenes, as you advance towards the north, along the banks of the river, and always on the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy, you meet with the country of Smolensk, through which lies the great road that leads from Poland to Muscovy. This way the czar directed his flight; and the king pursued him by long marches. Part of the Russian rear-guard was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the Swedish vanguard. The latter

had generally the advantage; but they weakened themselves even by conquering in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they always lost a number of men.

On the 22d of September, 1708, the king attacked, near Smolensk, a body of ten thousand horse, and six thousand Calmucks.

These Calmucks are Tartars, living between the kingdom of Astrakhan, which is subject to the czar, and that of Samarcand, belonging to the Usbeck Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The country of the Calmucks extends eastwards to the mountains which divide Mongolia from western Asia. Those who inhabit that part of the country which borders upon Astrakhan, are tributary to the czar, who pretends to an absolute authority over them; but their vagrant life hinders him from making good his claim, and obliges him to treat them in the same manner in which the Grand Seignior treats the Arabs, sometimes conniving at, and sometimes punishing their robberies. There are always some of these Calmucks in the Russian army; and the czar had even reduced them to a regular discipline, like the rest of his soldiers.

The king attacked these troops with only six regiments of horse, and four thousand foot; broke their ranks at the first onset, at the head of his Ostrogothic regiment, and obliged them to fly. He pursued them through rugged and hollow ways, where the Calmucks lay concealed, who soon began to show themselves and cut off the regiment in which the king fought from the rest of the Swedish army. In an instant the Russians and Calmucks surrounded this regiment, and penetrated even to the king. Two aids-de-camp who fought near him fell at his feet. The king's horse was killed under him; and as one of his equerries was presenting him with another, both the equerry and horse were struck dead upon the spot. Charles fought on foot, surrounded by some of his officers, who instantly flocked around him.

Many of them were taken, wounded, or slain, or pushed to a great distance from the king by the crowds that assailed them;

so that he was left at last with no more than five attendants. With his own hand he had killed above a dozen of the enemy, without receiving a single wound, owing to that surprising good fortune which had hitherto attended him, and upon which he always relied. At length a colonel, named Dahldorf, forced his way through the Calmucks, with a single company of his regiment, and arrived in time to save the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword. The army recovered its rank; Charles mounted his horse, and, fatigued as he was, pursued the Russians for two leagues.

The conqueror was still in the great road to the capital of Muscovy. The distance from Smolensk, near which the battle was fought, to Moscow, is about a hundred French leagues; and the army began to be in want of provision. The officers earnestly entreated the king to wait till General Löwenhaupt, who was coming up with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, should arrive. The king, who seldom indeed took counsel of any one, not only rejected this wholesome advice, but, to the great astonishment of all the army, quitted the road to Moscow, and began to march southwards towards the Ukraine, the country of the Cossacks, lying between Little Tartary, Poland, and Muscovy. This country extends about a hundred French leagues from south to north, and almost as many from east to west. It is divided into two parts, almost equal, by the Borysthenes, which runs from the northwest to the southeast. The chief town is called Baturim, and is situated upon the little river Sem. The northern part of the Ukraine is rich and well cultivated. The southern, lying in the forty-eighth degree of latitude, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, and yet one of the most desolate. Its bad form of government stifles in embryo, as it were, all the blessings which nature, if properly encouraged, would shower down upon the inhabitants. The people of these cantons, neighboring Little Tartary, neither sow nor plant, because the Tartars of Budziack [?] and Perekop, and the Moldavians, all of them brigands, would rob them of their harvests.

The Ukraine has always aspired to liberty; but being sur-

rounded by Muscovy, the dominions of the Grand Seignior, and Poland, it has been obliged to choose a protector, and, consequently, a master, in one of these three States. The Ukrainians at first put themselves under the protection of the Poles, who treated them with great severity. They afterwards submitted to the Russians, who governed them with despotic sway. They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general; but they were soon deprived of that right, and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

The person who then filled that station was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, and born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been brought up as a page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of learning in his court. An intrigue, which he had had in his youth with the lady of a Polish gentleman, having been discovered, the husband caused him to be bound stark-naked upon a wild horse, and let him go in that condition. The horse, which had been brought out of the Ukraine, returned to its own country, and carried Mazeppa along with it, half-dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people gave him assistance; and he lived among them for a long time, and signalized himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks; and his reputation daily increasing, the czar found it necessary to make him prince of the Ukraine.

While he was one day at the table with the czar at Moscow, the emperor proposed to him to discipline the Cossacks, and to render them more dependent. Mazeppa replied, that the situation of the Ukraine, and the genius of the nation, were insuperable obstacles to such a scheme. The czar, who began to be overheated with wine, and who had not always the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him impaled.

Mazeppa, on his return to the Ukraine, formed the design of a revolt; and the execution of it was greatly facilitated by the Swedish army, which soon after appeared on his frontiers. He resolved to render himself independent, and to erect the

Ukraine and some other ruins of the Russian empire into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprising, and indefatigable, though advanced in years, he entered into a secret league with the King of Sweden, to hasten the downfall of the czar, and to convert it to his own advantage.

The king appointed the rendezvous near the river Desna. Mazeppa promised to meet him there at the head of thirty thousand men, with ammunition and provisions, and all his treasures, which were immense. The Swedish army therefore continued its march on that side, to the great grief of all the officers, who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossacks. Charles sent orders to Löwenhaupt to bring his troops and provisions with all possible dispatch into the Ukraine, where he proposed to pass the winter, that, having once secured that country, he might the more easily conquer Muscovy in the ensuing spring; and, in the mean time, he advanced towards the river Desna, which falls into the Borysthenes at Kiev.

The obstructions they had hitherto found in their march were but trifling, in comparison with what they encountered in this new road. They were obliged to cross a marshy forest fifty leagues in length. General Lagercrona, who marched before with five thousand soldiers and pioneers, led the army astray to the eastward, thirty leagues from the right road. It was not till after a march of four days that the king discovered the mistake. With great difficulty they regained the main road; but almost all their artillery and wagons were lost, being either stuck fast, or quite sunk in the mud.

At last, after a march of twelve days, attended with so many vexations and untoward circumstances, during which they had consumed the small quantity of biscuit that was left, the army, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, arrived on the banks of the Desna, in the very spot which Mazeppa had marked out as the place of rendezvous; but instead of meeting with that prince, they found a body of Muscovites advancing towards the other bank of the river. The king was astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep, that they were obliged to let

the soldiers down with ropes. They crossed it in their usual manner, some on floats, which were made in haste, and others by swimming. The body of Muscovites which arrived at the same time, did not exceed eight thousand men; so that it made but little resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced further into this desolate country, alike uncertain of his road and of Mazeppa's fidelity. That Cossack appeared at last, but rather like a fugitive than a powerful ally. The Muscovites had discovered and defeated his design; they had fallen upon the Cossacks and cut them in pieces. His principal friends, being taken sword in hand, had, to the number of thirty, been broken upon the wheel; his towns were reduced to ashes; his treasures plundered; the provisions he was preparing for the King of Sweden seized; and it was with great difficulty that he himself made his escape with six thousand men, and some horses laden with gold and silver. However, he gave the king some hopes that he should be able to assist him by his intelligence in that unknown country, and by the affection of all the Cossacks, who, being enraged against the Russians, flocked to the camp and supplied the army with provisions.

Charles hoped that General Löwenhaupt at least would come and repair this misfortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, who were better than a hundred thousand Cossacks, together with ammunition and provisions. At length he arrived, in much the same condition with Mazeppa.

He had already passed the Borysthenes above Mohilev, and advanced twenty leagues beyond it, on the road to the Ukraine. He was bringing the king a convoy of eight thousand wagons, with the money which he had levied in his march through Lithuania. As he approached the town of Liesna, near the conflux of the rivers Pronia and Sossa, which fall into the Borysthenes far below, the czar appeared at the head of nearly forty thousand men.

The Swedish general, who had not sixteen thousand complete, scorned to shelter himself in a fortified camp. A long train of victories had inspired the Swedes with so much con-

fidence, that they never informed themselves of the number of their enemies, but only of the place where they lay. Accordingly, on the seventh of October, 1708, in the afternoon, Löwenhaupt advanced against them with great resolution. In the first attack the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Russians. The czar's army was thrown into confusion, and fled on all sides. The Emperor of Russia saw himself upon the point of being entirely defeated. He was sensible that the safety of his dominions depended upon the success of this day, and that he would be utterly ruined, should Löwenhaupt join the King of Sweden with a victorious army.

The moment he saw his troops begin to flinch, he ran to the rear-guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted. "I charge you," said he to them, "to fire upon every one that runs away, and even to kill me, should I be so cowardly as to fly." From thence he returned to the vanguard, and rallied his troops in person, assisted by the princes Mentchikof and Gallitzin. Löwenhaupt, who had received strict orders to rejoin his master, chose rather to continue his march than renew the battle, imagining he had done enough to prevent the enemy from pursuing him.

Next morning, about eleven o'clock, the czar attacked him near a morass, and extended his lines with a view to surround him. The Swedes faced about on all sides; and the battle was maintained for the space of two hours with equal courage and obstinacy. The loss of the Muscovites was three times greater than that of the Swedes; the former, however, still kept their ground, and the victory was left undecided.

At four in the afternoon, General Bayer brought the czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time with more fury and eagerness than ever, and lasted till night put an end to the combat. At last superior numbers prevailed, the Swedes were broken, routed, and driven back to their baggage. Löwenhaupt rallied his troops behind the wagons. The Swedes were conquered, but disdained to fly They were still about nine thousand in number, and not so much as one of them deserted. The general drew them up

with as much ease as if they had not been vanquished. The czar, on the other side, remained all night under arms; and forbade his officers, under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death, to leave their ranks for the sake of plunder.

Next morning, at daybreak, he ordered a fresh assault. Löwenhaupt had retired to an advantageous situation, at the distance of a few miles, after having spiked part of his cannon, and set fire to his wagons.

The Muscovites arrived in time to prevent the whole convoy from being consumed by the flames. They seized about six thousand wagons, which they saved. The czar, desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent one of his generals, named Phlug, to attack them again for the fifth time. That general offered them an honorable capitulation. Löwenhaupt refused it, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost about one half in this action, and the other remained unbroken. At last, night coming on, Löwenhaupt, after having sustained five battles against forty[1] thousand men, passed the Sossa with about five thousand soldiers that remained. The czar lost about ten thousand men in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Löwenhaupt that of disputing the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat, without being obliged to surrender. Thus he arrived in his master's camp with the honor of having made such a noble defence, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor an army.

By these means Charles found himself destitute of provisions, cut off from all communication with Poland, and surrounded with enemies, in the heart of a country where he had no resource but his own courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was still more terrible in those quarters of the world than in

[1] In his History of Russia, Voltaire reduces this number to twenty thousand.

France, destroyed part of his army. Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies; and ventured to make long marches with his troops during this mortal cold. It was in one of these marches that two thousand men fell dead with cold before his eyes. The dragoons had no boots, and the foot-soldiers were without shoes, and almost without clothes. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of wild beasts, in the best manner they could. They were frequently in want of bread. They were obliged to throw almost all their cannon into the marshes and rivers, for want of horses to draw them; so that this army, which was once so flourishing, was reduced to twenty-four thousand men ready to perish with hunger. They no longer received any news from Sweden, nor were able to send any thither. In this condition only one officer complained. "What," said the king to him, "are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? If you are a good soldier, I will lead you to such a distance, that you shall hardly be able to receive news from Sweden once in three years."

The Marquis de Brancas, afterwards ambassador in Sweden, told me, that a soldier ventured, in presence of the whole army, to present to the king, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was the only food they then had, and of which they had not even a sufficient quantity. The king received the bit of bread without the least emotion, eat it up, and then said coldly to the soldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten." This incident, trifling as it is, if indeed any thing that increases respect and confidence can be said to be trifling, contributed more than all the rest to make the Swedish army support those hardships which would have been intolerable under any other general.

While he was in this situation, he at last received a letter from Stockholm, by which he was informed of the death of his sister, the Duchess of Holstein, who was carried off by the small-pox, in the month of December, 1708, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She was a princess as mild and gentle as her brother was imperious in his disposition, and impla

cable in his revenge. He had always entertained a great affection for her; and was the more afflicted with her death, that now beginning to taste of misfortunes himself, he had become the more susceptible of tender impressions.

By this packet he was likewise informed, that they had raised money and troops, in obedience to his orders; but nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stockholm there were nearly five hundred leagues to travel, and an enemy superior in number to engage.

The czar, who was as active as the King of Sweden, after having sent some fresh troops to the assistance of the confederates in Poland, who under the command of General Siniawski, exerted their joint efforts against Stanislaus, immediately advanced into the Ukraine in the midst of this severe winter, to make head against his Swedish majesty. Then he continued to pursue the political scheme he had formed of weakening his enemy by petty rencounters, wisely judging that the Swedish army must in the end be entirely ruined, as it could not possibly be recruited. The cold must certainly have been very severe, as it obliged the two monarchs to agree to a suspension of arms. But on the first of February they renewed their military operations, in the midst of frost and snow.

After several slight skirmishes, and some losses, the king perceived, in the month of April, that he had only eighteen thousand Swedes remaining. Mazeppa, the prince of the Cossacks, supplied them with provisions; without his assistance, the army must have perished with want and hunger. At this conjuncture, the czar made proposals to Mazeppa for submitting again to his authority. But whether it was that the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had perished, made the Cossack apprehend the same danger for himself, or that he was desirous of revenging their death, he continued faithful to his new ally.

Charles, with his eighteen thousand Swedes, had neither laid aside the design nor the hopes of penetrating to Moscow. Towards the end of May he laid siege to Poltava, upon the river Vorskla, at the eastern extremity of the Ukraine, and thirty

leagues from the Borysthenes. This country is inhabited by the Zaporogues, the most remarkable people in the universe. They are a collection of ancient Russians, Poles, and Tartars, professing a species of Christianity, and exercising a kind of freebooting, somewhat akin to that of the buccaneers. They choose a chief, whom they frequently depose or strangle. They allow no women to live among them; but they carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues around, and bring them up in their own manners. The summer they always pass in the open fields; in winter they shelter themselves in large barns, containing four or five thousand men. They fear nothing; they live free; they brave death for the smallest booty, with as much intrepidity as Charles XII did, in order to obtain the power of bestowing crowns. The czar gave them sixty thousand florins, hoping by this means to engage them in his interest. They took his money; and, influenced by the powerful eloquence of Mazeppa, declared in favor of Charles XII; but their service was of very little consequence, as they think it the most egregious folly to fight for any thing but plunder. It was no small advantage, however, that they were prevented from doing harm. The number of their troops was, at most, but about two thousand. One morning ten of their chiefs were presented to the king; but it was with great difficulty they could be prevailed upon to remain sober, as they commonly begin the day by getting drunk. They were brought to the intrenchments, where they showed their dexterity in firing with long carbines; for being placed upon the mounds, they killed such of the enemy as they picked out at the distance of two hundred paces. To these banditti Charles added some thousands of Walachians, whom he had hired from the Khan of Little Tartary; and thus laid siege to Poltava, with all these troops of Zaporogues, Cossacks, and Walachians, which, joined to his eighteen thousand Swedes, composed an army of about thirty thousand men; but an army in a wretched condition, and in want of every thing. The czar had formed a magazine in Poltava. If the king should take it, he would open himself a way to Moscow; and be able at least

amid the great abundance he would then possess, to wait the arrival of the succors which he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His only resource, therefore, being in the conquest of Poltava, he pressed the siege of it with great vigor. Mazeppa, who carried on a correspondence with some of the citizens, assured him that he would soon be master of it; and his assurance revived the hopes of the soldiers, who considered the taking of Poltava as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. In spite of all his precautions, Prince Mentchikof threw some fresh troops into the town; by which means the garrison was rendered almost five thousand strong.

They made several sallies, and sometimes with success. They likewise sprung a mine; but what saved the town from being taken, was the approach of the czar, who was advancing with seventy thousand men. Charles went to reconnoitre them on the twenty-seventh of June, which happened to be his birthday, and beat one of their detachments; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot from a carbine, which pierced his boot and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observable in his countenance, from which it could be suspected that he had received a wound. He continued to give orders with great composure, and after this accident remained almost six hours on horseback. One of his domestics observing that the sole of the king's boot was bloody, made haste to call the surgeons; and the pain had now become so severe, that they were obliged to assist him in dismounting, and to carry him to his tent. The surgeons examined the wound, and were of opinion that the leg must be cut off, which threw the army into the utmost consternation. But one of the surgeons, named Newman, who had more skill and courage than the rest, affirmed, that by making deep incisions he could save the king's leg. "Fall to work then presently," said the king to him: "cut boldly and fear nothing." He himself held the leg with both his hands,

and beheld the incisions that were made in it, as if the operation had been performed upon another person.

As they were laying on the dressing, he ordered an assault to be made the next morning; but he had hardly given these orders, when he was informed that the whole army of the enemy was advancing against him; in consequence of which he was obliged to alter his resolution. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself cooped up between the Borysthenes and the river that runs to Poltava, in a desert country, without any places of security, or ammunition, in the face of an army, which at once cut off his retreat, and prevented his being supplied with provisions. In this extremity, he did not assemble a council of war, as, considering the perplexed situation of his affairs, he ought to have done; but on the seventh or eighth of July, in the evening, he sent for Field-marshal Rehnskiöld to his tent, and without deliberation, or the least discomposure, ordered him to make the necessary dispositions for attacking the czar next day. Rehnskiöld made no objections, and went to carry his orders into execution. At the door of the king's tent he met Count Piper, with whom he had long lived on very bad terms, as frequently happens between the minister and the general. Piper asked him whether he had any news. "No," said the general coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as Count Piper had entered the tent, "Has Rehnskiöld told you nothing?" the king said. "Nothing," replied Piper. "Well then," resumed he, "I tell you that we shall give battle to-morrow." Count Piper was astonished at such a desperate resolution; but well knowing that it was impossible to make his master change his mind, he expressed his surprise only by his silence, and left Charles to sleep till break of day.

It was on the eighth of July, 1709, that the decisive battle of Poltava was fought between the two most famous monarchs that were then in the world: Charles XII, illustrious for nine years of victories; Peter Alexiovitch for nine years of pains taken to form troops equal to those of Sweden: the one glorious for having given away dominions, the other for having

civilized his own: Charles, fond of dangers, and fighting for glory alone; Alexiovitch, scorning to fly from danger, and never making war but from interested views: the Swedish monarch, liberal from an innate greatness of soul; the Muscovite, never granting favors but in order to serve some particular people: the former a prince of uncommon sobriety and continence, naturally magnanimous, and never cruel but once; the latter having not yet worn off the roughness of his education, or the barbarity of his country, as much the object of terror to his subjects as of admiration to strangers, and too prone to excesses, which even shortened his days. Charles had the title of "Invincible," of which a single moment might deprive him; the neighboring nations had already given Peter Alexiovitch the name of "Great," which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not forfeit by a defeat.

In order to form a distinct idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must figure to ourselves Poltava on the north, the camp of the King of Sweden on the south, stretching a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Poltava on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The czar had passed the river about a league from Poltava, towards the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At break of day the Swedes appeared before the trenches with four iron cannons for their whole artillery; the rest were left in the camp, with about three thousand men, and four thousand remained with the baggage; so that the Swedish army which advanced against the enemy consisted of about one-and-twenty thousand men, of which about sixteen thousand only were regular troops.

The generals Rehnskiöld, Roos, Löwenhaupt, Schlippenbach, Horn, Sparr, Hamilton, the Prince of Würtemberg, the king's relation, and some others, who had most of them seen the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day, when eight thousand Swedes defeated an army of eighty thousand Muscovites in their intrenchments. The officers exhorted

the soldiers by the same motive, and as they advanced they all encouraged one another.

Charles, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry, conducted the march. A party of horse advanced by his orders to attack that of the enemy, and the battle began with this engagement at half an hour past four in the morning. The enemy's horse was posted towards the west, on the right side of the Russian camp. Prince Mentchikof and Count Gollovin had placed them at certain distances between redoubts lined with cannon. General Schlippenbach, at the head of the Swedes, rushed upon them. All those who have served in the Swedish troops are sensible that it is almost impossible to withstand the fury of their first attack. The Muscovite squadrons were broken and routed. The czar ran up to rally them in person; his hat was pierced with a musket-ball; Mentchikof had three horses killed under him; and the Swedes cried out, victory!

Charles did not doubt that the battle was gained. About midnight he had sent General Creutz with five thousand horse or dragoons to take the enemy in flank, while he attacked them in front; but as his ill-fortune would have it, Creutz mistook his way, and did not make his appearance. The czar, who thought he was ruined, had time to rally his cavalry, and in his turn fell upon that of the king, which, not being supported by the detachment of Creutz, was likewise broken. Schlippenbach was taken prisoner in this engagement. At the same time seventy-two pieces of cannon played from the camp upon the cavalry, and the Russian foot, opening their lines, advanced to attack Charles's infantry.

After this, the czar detached Prince Mentchikof to go and take post between Poltava and the Swedes. Prince Mentchikof executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition. He not only cut off the communication between the Swedish army and the camp before Poltava, but, having met with a corps of reserve, he surrounded them and cut them to pieces. If Mentchikof performed this exploit of his own accord, Russia is indebted to him for its preservation: if it was by the

orders of the czar, he was an adversary worthy of Charles XII. Meanwhile the Russian infantry came out of their lines, and advanced into the plain in order of battle. On the other hand, the Swedish cavalry rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy, and the king, assisted by Field-marshal Rehnskiöld, made the necessary dispositions for a general engagement.

He ranged the few troops that were left him in two lines, his infantry occupying the centre and his cavalry forming the two wings. The czar disposed his army in the same manner. He had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy-two pieces of cannon, while the Swedes had no more than four to oppose him, and began to be in want of powder.

The Emperor of Muscovy was in the centre of his army, having then only the title of major-general, and seemed to obey General Sheremetef. But he rode from rank to rank in the character of emperor, mounted on a Turkish horse, which had been given him as a present by the Grand Seignior, animating the captains and soldiers, and promising rewards to them all.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the first discharges of the Russian cannon carried off the two horses of Charles's litter. He caused two others to be immediately put to it. A second discharge broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of four-and-twenty Drabans, who mutually relieved each other in carrying him, one-and-twenty were killed. The Swedes, struck with consternation, began to stagger; and the cannon of the enemy continuing to mow them down, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second began to fly. In this last action, it was only a single line of ten thousand Russian infantry that routed the Swedish army: so much were matters changed!

All the Swedish writers allege that they would have gained the battle if they had not committed several blunders; but all the officers affirm that it was a great blunder to give battle at all, and a greater still to shut themselves up in a desert country, against the advice of the most prudent generals, in opposition to a warlike enemy, three times stronger than Charles,

both in number of men and in the many resources from which the Swedes were entirely cut off. The remembrance of Narva was the chief cause of Charles's misfortune at Poltava.

The Prince of Würtemberg, General Rehnskiöld, and several principal officers, were already made prisoners; the camp before Poltava was stormed, and all was thrown into a confusion which it was impossible to rectify. Count Piper, with some officers of the chancery, had left the camp, and neither knew what to do nor what had become of the king, but ran about from one corner of the field to another. A major, called Bere, offered to conduct them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke which covered the plain, and the dissipation of mind so natural amid such a desolation, brought them straight to the counterscarp of the town, where they were all made prisoners by the garrison.

The king scorned to fly, and yet was unable to defend himself. General Poniatowski happened to be near him at that instant. He was a colonel of Stanislaus' Swedish guards, a man of extraordinary merit, and had been induced, from his strong attachment to the person of Charles, to follow him into the Ukraine, without any post in the army. He was a man, who, in all the occurrences of life, and amid those dangers when others would at most have displayed their courage, always took his measures with dispatch, prudence, and success. He made a sign to two Drabans, who took the king under the arm and placed him on his horse, notwithstanding the excruciating pain of his wounds.

Poniatowski, though he had no command in the army, became on this occasion a general through necessity, and drew up five hundred horse near the king's person—some of them Drabans, others officers, and a few private troopers. This body being assembled, and animated by the misfortune of their prince, forced their way through more than ten Russian regiments, and conducted Charles through the midst of the enemy for the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

Charles, being closely pursued in his flight, had his horse

killed under him; and Colonel Gierta, though wounded and spent with loss of blood, gave him his. Thus, in the course of the flight, they twice put this conqueror on horseback, though he had not been able to mount a horse during the engagement.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distressful circumstances; but he was obliged to fly a still greater distance. They found Count Piper's coach among the baggage, for the king had never used one since he left Stockholm. They put him into this vehicle, and fled towards the Borysthenes with great precipitation. The king, who, from the time of his being set on horseback till his arrival at the baggage, had not spoken a single word, at length inquired, what had become of Count Piper? They told him he was taken prisoner, with all the officers of the chancery. "And General Rehnskiöld and the Duke of Würtemberg?" added the king. "Yes," said Poniatowski. "Prisoners to the Russians!" resumed Charles, shrugging up his shoulders. "Come then, let us rather go to the Turks." They could not perceive, however, the least mark of dejection in his countenance; and had any one seen him at that time, without knowing his situation, he would never have suspected that he was conquered and wounded.

While he was getting off, the Russians seized his artillery in the camp before Poltava, his baggage, and his military chest, in which they found six millions in specie, the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Nine thousand men, partly Swedes and partly Cossacks, were killed in the battle, and about six thousand taken prisoners. There still remained about sixteen thousand men, including the Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, who fled towards the Borysthenes, under the conduct of General Löwenhaupt. He marched one way with these fugitive troops, and the king took another road with some of his horse. The coach in which he rode broke down by the way, and they again set him on horseback; and, to complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood, where, his courage being no longer able to support his exhausted spirits, the pain of his

wound becoming more intolerable through fatigue, and his horse falling under him through excessive weariness, he lay some hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being surprised every moment by the conquerors, who were searching for him on all sides.

At last, on the 9th or 10th of July, at night, he found himself on the banks of the Borysthenes. Löwenhaupt had just arrived with the shattered remains of the army. It was with an equal mixture of joy and sorrow that the Swedes again beheld their king, whom they thought to be dead. The enemy was approaching. The Swedes had neither a bridge to pass the river, nor time to make one, nor powder to defend themselves, nor provisions to support an army, which had eaten nothing for two days. But the remains of this army were Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Most of the officers imagined that they were to halt there for the Russians, without flinching, and that they would either conquer or die on the banks of the Borysthenes. Charles would undoubtedly have taken this resolution, had he not been exhausted with weakness. His wound had now come to a suppuration, attended with a fever; and it has been remarked, that men of the greatest intrepidity, when seized with the fever that is common in a suppuration, lose that impulse to valor, which, like all other virtues, requires the direction of a clear head. Charles was no longer himself. This, at least, is what I have been well assured of, and what indeed is extremely probable. They carried him along like a sick person in a state of insensibility. Happily there was still left a sorry calash, which by chance they had brought along with them: this they put on board of a little boat, and the king and General Mazeppa embarked in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money; but the current being rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the Cossack threw more than three fourths of his treasures into the river to lighten the boat. Muller, the king's chancellor, and Count Poniatowski, a man more necessary to the king than ever, on account of his admirable dexterity in finding expedients in difficulties, crossed over in

other barks with some officers. Three hundred troopers of the king's guards, and a great number of Poles and Cossacks, trusting to the goodness of their horses, ventured to cross the river by swimming. Their troop, keeping close together, resisted the current and broke the waves; but all those who attempted to pass separately, a little below, were carried down by the stream, and sunk in the river. Of all the foot who attempted to pass, there was not a single man that reached the other side.

While the shattered remains of the army were in this extremity, Prince Mentchikof came up with ten thousand horsemen, having each a foot-soldier behind him. The carcasses of the Swedes who had died by the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, showed Prince Mentchikof but too plainly the road which the fugitive army had taken. The prince sent a trumpet to the Swedish general to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were presently dispatched by Löwenhaupt to receive the commands of the conqueror. Before that day, sixteen thousand soldiers of King Charles would have attacked the whole forces of the Russian empire, and would have perished to a man rather than surrender. But after the loss of a battle, and a flight of two days,—deprived of the presence of their prince, who was himself constrained to fly,—the strength of every soldier being exhausted, and their courage no longer supported by the least prospect of relief, the love of life overcame their natural intrepidity. Colonel Troutfetre alone, observing the Muscovites approach, began to advance with one Swedish battalion to attack them, hoping, by this means, to induce the rest of the troops to follow his example. But Löwenhaupt was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardor. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army were made prisoners of war. Some soldiers, reduced to despair at the thoughts of falling into the hands of the Muscovites, threw themselves into the Borysthenes. Two officers of the regiment commanded by the brave Troutfetre killed each other, and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in the presence of Prince Mentchikof, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty

thousand Muscovites had done nine years before at those of the King of Sweden, at Narva. But whereas the king sent back all the Russians whom he did not fear, the czar retained the Swedes that were taken at Poltava.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed through the czar's dominions, particularly in Siberia, a vast province of Great Tartary, which extends eastward to the frontiers of the Chinese empire. In this barbarous country, where even the use of bread was unknown, the Swedes, who had become ingenious through necessity, exercised the trades and employments of which they had the least notion. All the distinctions which fortune makes among men, were there banished. The officer, who could not follow any trade, was obliged to cleave and carry wood for the soldier, now turned tailor, clothier, joiner, mason, or goldsmith, and who got a subsistence by his labor. Some of the officers became painters, and others architects. Some of them taught the languages and mathematics. They even established some public schools, which, in time, became so useful and famous, that the citizens of Moscow sent their children thither for education.

Count Piper, the King of Sweden's first minister, was for a long time confined in prison at Petersburg. The czar was persuaded, as well as the rest of Europe, that this minister had sold his master to the Duke of Marlborough, and drawn on Muscovy the arms of Sweden, which might have given peace to Europe; for which reason he rendered his confinement the more severe. Piper died in Muscovy a few years after, little assisted by his own family, which lived in opulence at Stockholm, and vainly lamented by his sovereign, who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his minister, which he feared the czar would not accept; for no cartel of exchange had ever been settled between them.

The Emperor of Muscovy, elated with a joy which he was at no pains to conceal, received upon the field of battle the prisoners, whom they brought to him in crowds; and asked every moment, "Where then is my brother Charles?"

He did the Swedish generals the honor of inviting them to

dine with him. Among other questions which he put to them, he asked General Rehnskiöld, what might be the number of his master's troops before the battle? Rehnskiöld answered, that the king always kept the muster-roll himself, and would never show it to any one; but that, for his own part, he imagined the whole might be about thirty thousand, of which eighteen thousand were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks. The czar seemed to be surprised, and asked how they durst venture te penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Poltava with such a handful of men? "We were not always consulted," replied the Swedish general; "but, like faithful servants, we obeyed our master's orders, without ever presuming to contradict them." The czar, upon receiving this answer, turned about to some of his courtiers, who were formerly suspected of having engaged in a conspiracy against him: "Ah," said he, "see how a king should be served;" and then taking a glass of wine, "To the health," said he, "of my masters in the art of war." Rehnskiöld asked him who were the persons whom he honored with so high a title? "You, gentlemen, the Swedish generals," replied the czar. "Your majesty then," resumed the count, "is very ungrateful, to treat your masters with so much severity." After dinner the czar caused their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and behaved to them like a prince who had a mind to give his subjects a lesson of generosity and politeness, with which he was well acquainted. But this same prince, who treated the Swedish generals with so much humanity, caused all the Cossacks that fell into his hands to be broken upon the wheel.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony in such a triumphant manner, was now no more. One half of them had perished with hunger, and the other half were either massacred or made slaves. Charles XII had lost in one day the fruit of nine years' labor, and of almost a hundred battles. He made his escape in a wretched calash, attended by Major-general Hord, who was dangerously wounded. The rest of his troop followed, some on foot, some on horseback, and others in wagons, through a desert, where neither huts, tents, men,

beasts, nor roads were to be seen; every thing was wanting, even to water itself. It was now the beginning of July; the country lay in the forty-seventh degree of latitude; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun more insupportable; the horses fell by the way; and the men were ready to die with thirst. A brook of muddy water which they found towards evening was all they met with; they filled some bottles with this water, which saved the lives of the king's little troop. After a march of five days, he at last found himself on the banks of the river Hypanis, now called Bog by the barbarians, who have spoiled not only the general face, but even the very names of those countries, which once flourished so nobly in the possession of the Greek colonies. This river joins the Borysthenes some miles lower, and falls along with it into the Black Sea.

On the other side of the Bog, towards the south, stands the little town of Otchakov, on the frontier of the Turkish empire. The inhabitants seeing a body of soldiers approach, to whose dress and language they were entire strangers, refused to carry them over the river, without an order from Mehemet Pasha, governor of Otchakov. The king sent an express to the governor, demanding a passage; but the Turk not knowing what to do, in a country where one false step frequently costs a man his life, durst not venture to take any thing upon himself, without having first obtained permission of the Seraskier of the province, who resided at Bender in Bessarabia. While they were waiting for this permission, the Russians who had made the king's army prisoners had crossed the Borysthenes, and were approaching to take him also. At last the pasha of Otchakov sent word to the king, that he would furnish him with one small boat, to transport himself and two or three of his attendants. In this extremity the Swedes took by force what they could not obtain by gentle means: some of them went over to the further side in a small skiff, seized on some boats, and brought them to the hither bank of the river. And happy it was for them that they did so; for the masters of the Turkish barks, fearing they should lose such a favorable opportunity

of getting a good freight, came in crowds to offer their service. At that very instant arrived the favorable answer of the seraskier of Bender; and the king had the mortification to see five hundred of his men seized by the enemy, whose insulting bravadoes he even heard. The Pasha of Otchakov, by means of an interpreter, asked his pardon for the delays which had occasioned the loss of these five hundred men, and humbly entreated him not to complain of it to the Grand Seignior. Charles promised him that he would not; but, at the same time, gave him a severe reprimand, as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender, who was likewise seraskier, a title which answers to that of general, and pasha of the province, which signifies governor and intendant, forthwith sent an aga to compliment the king, and to offer him a magnificent tent, with provision, baggage, wagons, and all the conveniences, officers, and attendants necessary to conduct him to Bender in a splendid manner; for it is the custom of the Turks, not only to defray the charges of ambassadors to the place of their residence, but likewise to supply, with great liberality, the necessities of those princes who take refuge among them, during the time of their stay.

BOOK V.

State of the Ottoman Porte. Charles resides near Bender. His employments. His intrigues at the Porte. His designs. Augustus restored to his throne. The King of Denmark makes a descent upon Sweden. All the other dominions of Charles are invaded. The Czar enters Moscow in triumph. Affair of the Pruth. History of the Czarina, who, from a country-girl, became empress.

Achmet III was at that time emperor of the Turks. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, by a revolution not unlike that which transferred the crown of England from James II to his son-in-law William. Mustapha being governed by his mufti, who was hated by all the Turks, provoked the whole empire to rise against him. His army, by the assistance of which he hoped to punish the malcontents, went over to the rebels. He was seized, and deposed in form, and his brother taken from the seraglio and advanced to the throne, almost without a drop of blood being spilled. Achmet shut up the deposed sultan in the seraglio at Constantinople, where he lived for several years, to the great astonishment of Turkey, which had been wont to see the dethronement of her princes always followed by their death.

The new sultan, as the only recompense for a crown which he owed to the ministers, to the generals, to the officers of the Janizaries, and, in a word, to those who had any hand in the revolution, put them all to death one after another, fearing lest they should one day attempt a second revolution. By sacrificing so many brave men, he weakened the strength of the nation, but established his throne, at least, for some years. The next object of his attention was to amass riches. He was

the first of the Ottoman race that ventured to make a small alteration in the current coin, and to impose new taxes; but he was obliged to drop both these enterprises, through fear of an insurrection. The rapacity and tyranny of the Grand Seignior are seldom felt by any but the officers of the empire, who, whatever they may be in other respects, are domestic slaves to the sultan; but the rest of the Mussulmans live in profound tranquillity, secure of their liberty, their lives and fortunes.

Such was the Turkish emperor to whom the King of Sweden fled for refuge. As soon as he set foot on the sultan's territories, he wrote him a letter, which bears date the 13th of July, 1709. Several copies of this letter were spread abroad, all of which are now held to be spurious; but of all those I have seen, there is not one which does not sufficiently indicate the natural haughtiness of the author, and is more suitable to his courage than his condition. The sultan did not return him an answer till towards the end of September. The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles sensible what a mighty difference there was between a Turkish emperor and a king of a part of Scandinavia, a conquered and fugitive Christian. For the rest, all those letters, which kings seldom write themselves, are but vain formalities, which neither serve to discover the characters of princes, nor the state of their affairs.

Though Charles XII was in reality no better than a prisoner honorably treated in Turkey, he yet formed the design of arming the Ottoman empire against his enemies. He flattered himself that he should be able to reduce Poland under the yoke, and subdue Russia. He had an envoy at Constantinople; but the person that served him most effectually in his vast projects, was the Count Poniatowski, who went to Constantinople without a commission, and soon rendered himself necessary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and at last dangerous even to the grand-viziers.[1]

One of those who seconded his designs with the greatest

[1] It was from this nobleman I received not only the Remarks which have been published, and of which the Chaplain Norberg has made use, but likewise several other manuscripts relating to this history.

activity, was the physician Fonseca,[1] a Portuguese Jew, settled at Constantinople,—a man of knowledge and address, well qualified for the management of business, and perhaps the only philosopher of his nation. His profession procured him a free access to the Ottoman Porte, and frequently gained him the confidence of the viziers. With this gentleman I was very well acquainted at Paris; and all the particulars I am going to relate, were, he assured me, unquestionable truths. Count Poniatowski has informed me, both by letters and by word of mouth, that he had the address to convey some letters to the Sultaness Valide, the mother of the reigning emperor, who had formerly been ill-used by her son, but now began to recover her influence in the seraglio. A Jewess, who was often admitted to this princess, was perpetually recounting to her the exploits of the King of Sweden, and charmed her ear by these relations. The sultaness, moved by that secret inclination with which most women feel inspired in favor of extraordinary men, even without having seen them, openly espoused the king's cause in the seraglio. She called him by no other name than that of her lion. "And when will you," she would sometimes say to the sultan her son,—"when will you help my lion to devour this czar?" She even dispensed with the rules of the seraglio, so far as to write several letters with her own hand to Count Poniatowski, in whose custody they still are, at the time of my writing this history.

Meanwhile the king was honorably conducted to Bender, through the desert that was formerly called the Wilderness of the Getæ. The Turks took care that nothing should be wanting on the road, to render his journey agreeable. A great many Poles, Swedes, and Cossacks, who had escaped from the Muscovites, came by different ways to increase his train on the road. By the time he reached Bender he had eighteen hundred men, who were all maintained and lodged—both they and their horses—at the expense of the Grand Seignior.

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[1] He was a renegade Frenchman, named Goin, first physician to the seraglio.

The king chose to encamp near Bender, rather than lodge in the town. The seraskier Jussuf, pasha, caused a magnificent tent to be erected for him; and tents were likewise provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after, Charles built a house in this place: the officers followed his example, and the soldiers raised barracks; so that his camp insensibly became a little town. As the king was not yet cured of his wound, he was obliged to have a carious bone extracted from his foot. But as soon as he could mount a horse, he resumed his wonted labors, always rising before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers. By way of amusement, he sometimes played at chess; and, as the characters of men are often discovered by the most trifling incidents, it may not be improper to observe, that he always advanced the king first at that game, and made greater use of him than of any of the other men, by which he was always a loser.

At Bender he had all the necessaries of life in great abundance, a felicity that seldom falls to the lot of a conquered and fugitive prince; for, besides the more than sufficient quantity of provisions, and the five hundred crowns a day, which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he drew some money from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Constantinople. Part of this money was employed in forwarding his intrigues in the seraglio, in buying the favors of the viziers, or procuring their ruin. The rest he squandered away with great profusion among his own officers, and the Janizaries who composed his guards at Bender. The dispenser of these acts of liberality was Grothusen, his favorite,—a man who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as fond of giving as his master. He once brought him an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines; ten thousand crowns given to the Swedes and Janizaries by the generous orders of his majesty, and the rest eaten up by himself. "It is thus," said the king, "that I would have friends give in their accounts. Muller makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand livres. I like the laconic style of Grothusen much better." One of his old officers, who was suspected of being somewhat covetous, com-

plained that his majesty gave all to Grothusen. "I give money," replied the king, "to none but those who know how to use it." This generosity frequently reduced him to such a low ebb, that he had not wherewithal to give. A better economy in his acts of generosity would have been as much for his honor, and more for his interest; but it was the failing of this prince to carry all the virtues beyond the due bounds.

Great numbers of strangers went from Constantinople to see him. The Turks, and the neighboring Tartars came thither in crowds: all respected and admired him. His inflexible resolution to abstain from wine, and his regularity in assisting twice a day at public prayers, made them say that he was a true Mussulman, and inspired them with an ardent desire of marching along with him to the conquest of Muscovy.

During his abode at Bender, which was much longer than he expected, he insensibly acquired a taste for reading. Baron Fabricius, a gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Duke of Holstein, a young man of an amiable character, who possessed that gayety of temper, and easy turn of wit, which is so agreeable to princes, was the person who engaged him in these literary amusements. He had been sent to reside with him at Bender in the character of envoy, to take care of the interests of the young Duke of Holstein; and he succeeded in his negotiations by his open and agreeable behavior. He had read all the best French authors. He persuaded the king to read the tragedies of Pierre Corneille, those of Racine, and the works of Despreaux [Boileau]. The king had no relish for the satires of the last author, which indeed are far from being his best pieces; but he was very fond of his other writings. When he read that passage of the eighth satire, where the author treats Alexander as a fool and a madman, he tore out the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies, Mithridates pleased him most, because the situation of that monarch, who, though vanquished, still breathed vengeance, was so similar to his own. He showed Fabricius the passages that struck him; but would never read any of them aloud, nor ever hazard a single word in French. Nay, when he afterwards saw M. Désaleurs, the

French ambassador at the Porte, a man of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother-tongue, he answered him in Latin; and when M. Désaleurs protested that he did not understand four words of that language, the king, rather than talk French, sent for an interpreter.

Such were the occupations of Charles XII at Bender, where he waited till a Turkish army should come to his assistance. His envoy presented memorials in his name to the grand-vizier; and Poniatowski supported them with all his interest. This gentleman's address succeeded in every thing; he was always dressed in the Turkish fashion, and he had free access to every place. The Grand Seignior presented him with a purse of a thousand ducats, and the grand-vizier said to him: "I will take your king with one hand, and a sword in the other; I will lead him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men." The name of this grand-vizier was Chourlouli Ali Pasha; he was the son of a peasant of the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction is not reckoned a disgrace among the Turks, who have no rank of nobility, neither that which is annexed to certain employments, nor that which consists in titles. With them the dignity and importance of a man's character depends entirely upon his personal services. This is a custom which prevails in most of the Eastern countries,—a custom extremely natural, and which might be productive of the most beneficial effects, if posts of honor were conferred on none but men of merit; but the viziers, for the most part, are no better than the creatures of a black eunuch, or a favorite female slave.

The first minister soon changed his mind. The king could do nothing but negotiate, and the czar could give money, which he distributed with great profusion; and he even employed the money of Charles XII on this occasion. The military-chest, which he took at Poltava, furnished him with new arms against the vanquished king; and it was no longer the question at court, whether war should be made upon the Russians. The interest of the czar was all-powerful at the Porte, which granted such honors to his envoy as the Muscovite ministers

had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. They allowed him to have a seraglio, that is, a place in the quarter of the Franks, who converse with the foreign ministers. The czar thought he might even demand that General Mazeppa should be put into his hands, as Charles XII had caused the unhappy Patkul to be delivered up to him. Chourlouli Ali Pasha could refuse nothing to a prince who backed his demands with millions. Thus that same grand-vizier, who had formerly promised, in the most solemn manner, to lead the King of Sweden into Muscovy with two hundred thousand men, had the assurance to make him a proposal of consenting to the sacrifice of General Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at this demand. It is hard to say how far the vizier might have pushed the affair, had not Mazeppa, who was now seventy years of age, died exactly at this juncture. The king's grief and indignation were greatly increased, when he understood that Tolstoy, now become the czar's ambassador at the Porte, was served in public by the Swedes that had been slaves at Poltava, and that the brave soldiers were daily sold in the market at Constantinople. Nay, the Russian ambassador made no scruple of declaring openly, that the Mussulman troops at Bender were placed there rather with a view to secure the king's person, than to do him any honor.

Charles, abandoned by the grand-vizier, and vanquished by the czar's money in Turkey, as he had been by his arms in the Ukraine, saw himself deceived and despised by the Porte, and almost a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair. He alone remained firm, and never appeared in the least dejected. Convinced that the sultan was ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli Ali, his grand-vizier, he resolved to acquaint him with them; and Poniatowski undertook the execution of this hazardous enterprise. The Grand Seignior goes every Friday to the mosque, surrounded by his solaks, a kind of guards, whose turbans are adorned with such high feathers as to conceal the sultan from the view of the people. When any one has a petition to present to the Grand Seignior, he endeavors to mingle with the guards, and holds

the petition aloft. Sometimes the sultan condescends to receive it himself; but, for the most part, he orders an aga to take charge of it, and upon his return from the mosque causes the petition to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one daring to importune him with useless memorials and trifling petitions, inasmuch as they write less at Constantinople in a whole year than they do at Paris in one day. There is still less danger of any memorials being presented against the ministers, to whom he commonly remits them unread. Poniatowski had no other way of conveying the King of Sweden's complaint to the Grand Seignior. He drew up a heavy charge against the grand-vizier. M. de Fériol, who was then the French ambassador, and who gave me an account of the whole affair, got the memorial translated into the Turkish tongue. A Greek was hired to present it: this Greek, mingling with the guards of the Grand Seignior, held the paper so high for so long a time, and made such a noise, that the sultan observed him, and took the memorial himself.

This method of presenting memorials to the sultan against his viziers was frequently employed. A Swede, called Leloing, gave in another petition a few days after. Thus, in the Turkish empire, Charles XII was reduced to the necessity of using the same expedients with an oppressed subject.

Some days after this, the sultan sent the King of Sweden, as the only answer to his complaints, five-and-twenty Arabian horses, one of which, that had carried his highness, was covered with a saddle and housing enriched with precious stones, with stirrups of massive gold. This present was accompanied with an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and such as gave reason to suspect that the minister had done nothing without the sultan's consent. Chourlouli too, who was a perfect master in the art of dissimulation, sent the king five very curious horses. But Charles, with a lofty air, said to the person that brought them: "Go back to your master, and tell him that I don't receive presents from my enemies."

Poniatowski, having already ventured to present a petition against the grand-vizier, he next formed the bold design of

deposing him. Understanding that the vizier was disagreeable to the sultaness-mother, and that he was hated by the kislar aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and by the aga of the Janizaries, he prompted them all three to speak against him. It was something very surprising to see a Christian, a Pole, an uncommissioned agent of the King of Sweden, who had taken refuge among the Turks, caballing almost openly at the Porte against a viceroy of the Ottoman empire, who, at the same time, was both an able minister and a favorite of his master. Poniatowski could never have succeeded, and the bare attempt would have cost him his life, had not a power superior to all those that operated in his favor given a finishing stroke to the fortune of the grand-vizier, Chourlouli.

The sultan had a young favorite, who afterwards governed the Ottoman empire, and was killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwardein, which Prince Eugene of Savoy gained over the Turks. His name was Coumourgi Ali Pasha. His birth was much the same with that of Chourlouli, being the son of a coal-heaver, as *Coumourgi* imports; *coumour* in the Turkish tongue signifying *coal*. The Emperor Achmet II, uncle of Achmet III, having met Coumourgi, while yet an infant, in a little wood near Adrianople, was struck with his extraordinary beauty, and caused him to be conducted to the seraglio. Mustapha, the eldest son and successor of Mahomet, was very fond of him, and Achmet III made him his favorite. He had then no other place but that of *selictar-aga*, or sword-bearer to the crown. His extreme youth did not allow him to make any open pretensions to the post of grand-vizier; and yet he had the ambition to aspire to it. The Swedish faction could never draw over this favorite to their side. He had never been a friend to Charles, or to any other Christian prince, or to any of their ministers; but, on this occasion, he served King Charles XII without intending to do so. He joined with the Sultaness Valide and the great officers of the Porte to hasten the ruin of Chourlouli, who was equally hated by them all. This old minister, who had served his master for a long time, and with great fidelity, fell a victim to the

caprice of a boy and the intrigues of a foreigner. He was stripped of his dignity and riches. His wife, who was the daughter of the late Sultan Mustapha, was taken from him, and he was himself banished to Caffa, formerly called Theodosia, in Crim Tartary. The bull—that is to say, the seal of the empire—was given to Numan Couprougli [Kuprili], grandson to the great Couprougli, who took Candia. This new vizier was, what ill-informed Christians can hardly believe it possible for a Turk to be, a man of incorruptible virtue, a scrupulous observer of the law, and one who frequently opposed the rigid rules of justice to the wayward will of the sultan. He could not endure to hear of a war against Muscovy, which he considered as alike unjust and unnecessary; but the same attachment to his law, that prevented his making war upon the czar, contrary to the faith of treaties, made him observe the rights of hospitality towards the King of Sweden. "The law forbids you," he would say to his master, "to attack the czar, who has done you no injury; but it commands you to succor the King of Sweden, who is an unfortunate prince in your dominions." He sent his majesty eight hundred purses (every purse containing five hundred crowns), and advised him to return peaceably to his own dominions, either through the territories of the Emperor of Germany, or in some of the French vessels which then lay in the harbor of Constantinople, and which M. de Fériol, the French ambassador at the Porte, offered to Charles to conduct him to Marseilles. Count Poniatowski carried on his negotiations with greater activity than ever, and acquired such a superiority with an incorruptible vizier as the gold of the Muscovites was unable to counterbalance. The Russian faction thought it would be their wisest course to poison such a dangerous negotiator. They gained one of his domestics, who was to give him the poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was carried into execution. The poison was found in the hands of the domestic, contained in a small phial, which was carried to the Grand Seignior. The poisoner was tried in a full divan, and condemned to the galleys; the justice of the Turks never

inflicting death for those crimes that have not been perpe trated.

Charles, who could not be persuaded but that, sooner or later, he should be able to engage the Turkish empire in a war against Muscovy, rejected every proposal that was made for his peaceable return home. He was continually representing to the Turks the formidable power of that same czar, whom he had so long despised. His emissaries were perpetually insinuating that Peter Alexiovitch wanted to make himself master of the navigation of the Black Sea; and that after having subdued the Cossacks, he would carry his arms into Crim Tartary. Sometimes these representations aroused the Porte, sometimes the Russian ministers destroyed all their effect.

While Charles XII made his fate depend upon the caprice of viziers, and while he was alternately receiving favors and affronts from a foreign power, presenting petitions to the sultan, and subsisting upon his bounty in a desert, all his enemies, awaking from their former lethargy, invaded his domains.

The battle of Poltava was the first signal for a revolution in Poland. Augustus returned to that country, protesting against his abdication, against the peace of Altranstädt, and publicly accusing Charles XII, whom he no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He imprisoned Fingsten and Imhof, his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded their orders, and betrayed their master. His Saxon troops, which had been the pretext of his dethronement, conducted him back to Warsaw, accompanied by most of the Polish palatines, who, having formerly sworn fidelity to him, had afterwards done the same to Stanislaus, and had now come to do it again to Augustus. Siniawski himself rejoined his party, and laying aside the ambitious hopes of raising himself to the royal dignity, was content to remain grand-general of the crown. Flemming, his first minister, who had been obliged to leave Saxony, through fear of being delivered up with Patkul, now contributed by his address to bring back to his master's interest a great part of the Polish nobility.

The Pope absolved the people from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Stanislaus. This step of the holy father, seasonably taken, and supported by the forces of Augustus, was of considerable weight. It strengthened the credit of the court of Rome in Poland, the natives of which had no inclination at that time to dispute with the sovereign pontiffs their chimerical right of interfering in the temporal concerns of princes. Every one was ready to submit anew to the authority of Augustus, and willingly received an absolution, which, however useless in itself, the nuncio took care to represent as absolutely necessary.

The power of Charles and the grandeur of Sweden were now drawing towards their last period. Above ten crowned heads had long beheld, with fear and envy, the Swedish power extending itself far beyond its natural bounds, on the other side of the Baltic Sea, from the Düina to the Elbe. The fall of Charles, and his absence, revived the interested views, and rekindled the jealousies of all these princes, which had for a long time been laid asleep by treaties, and by their inability to break them.

The czar, who was more powerful than all of them put together, improving his late victory, took Viborg, and all Carelia, overrun Finland, laid siege to Riga, and sent a body of forces into Poland to aid Augustus in recovering his throne. The czar was, at that time, what Charles had been formerly,—the arbiter of Poland and the North; but all his measures were directed to the promotion of his own interest; whereas Charles had never been prompted by any other motives than those of revenge and glory. The Swedish monarch had succored his allies, and crushed his enemies, without reaping any fruit from his victories. The czar, behaving more like a prince and less like a hero, would not assist the King of Poland, but on condition that Livonia should be ceded to him; and that this province, for which Augustus had kindled the war, should remain forever in the possession of the Muscovites.

The King of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendahl, as Augustus had that of Altranstädt, began to entertain

thoughts of making himself master of the duchies of Holstein and Bremen, to which he renewed his pretensions. The King of Prussia had ancient claims upon Swedish Pomerania, which he now resolved to revive. The Duke of Mecklenburg was vexed to see that the Swedes were still in possession of Wismar, the finest town in the duchy. This prince was to marry a niece of the Russian emperor; and the czar wanted only a pretext for establishing himself in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, elector of Hanover, was likewise desirous of enriching himself with Charles's spoils. The Bishop of Münster too would have been willing enough to avail himself of some of his claims, had he been able to support them.

About twelve or thirteen thousand Swedes defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles possessed in Germany; and it was there that the war was most likely to begin. This storm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of its provinces shall be reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was still a greater difficulty. All these princes, except the czar, were then united against Louis XIV, whose power, for a long time, had been as formidable to the empire as that of Charles.

At the beginning of this century, Germany found itself hard pressed from south to north by the armies of France and Sweden. The French had passed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder, and had their forces, victorious as they then were, been joined together, the Empire had been utterly undone. But the same fatality that ruined Sweden had likewise humbled France. Sweden, however, had still more resources left; and Louis XIV carried on the war with vigor, though without success. Should Pomerania and the duchy of Bremen become the theatre of the war, it was to be feared that the empire would suffer by such an event; and that being weakened on that side, it would be less able to withstand the arms of Louis XIV. To prevent this danger, the Emperor, the princes of the Empire, Anne, queen of England, and the States-General of the United Provinces, concluded at the Hague, about the end of

the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers, that the war against the Swedes should not be in Pomerania, nor in any of the German provinces; and that the enemies of Charles XII should be at liberty to attack him anywhere else. Even the czar and the King of Poland acceded to this treaty, in which they caused to be inserted an article as extraordinary as the treaty itself, viz., that the twelve thousand Swedes who were in Pomerania should not be allowed to leave it in order to defend their other provinces.

To secure the execution of the treaty, and to maintain this imaginary neutrality, it was proposed to assemble an army, which should encamp on the banks of the Oder. An unheard-of novelty, to levy an army in order to prevent a war!—nay, the very princes, who were to pay the army, were most of them concerned to commence a war which they thus affected to prevent. The treaty imported that the army should be composed of the troops of the Emperor, of the King of Prussia, of the Elector of Hanover, of the Landgrave of Hesse, and of the Bishop of Münster.

The issue of this project was such as might naturally have been expected: it was not carried into execution. The princes who were to have furnished their contingents for completing the army, contributed nothing. There were not two regiments formed. Everybody talked of a neutrality, but nobody observed it; and the princes of the North, who had any quarrel with the King of Sweden, were left at full liberty to dispute with each other the spoils of that prince.

During these transactions, the czar having quartered his troops in Lithuania, and given orders for pushing the siege of Riga, returned to Moscow to show his people a sight as new as any thing he had hitherto done in the kingdom: this was a triumph of nearly the same nature with that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moscow on the first of January, 1710, under seven triumphal arches, erected in the streets, and adorned with every thing which the climate could

furnish, or which a flourishing commerce (rendered such by his care) could import. The procession began with a regiment of guards, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Liesna and Poltava, each of which was drawn by eight horses, covered with scarlet housings hanging down to the ground. Next came the standards, kettle-drums, and colors won at these two battles, carried by the officers and soldiers who had taken them. All these spoils were followed by the finest troops of the czar. After they had filed off, there appeared, in a chariot made on purpose,[1] the litter of Charles XII, found on the field of battle at Poltava, all shattered with two cannon-shots. Behind the litter marched all the prisoners two and two, among whom was Count Piper, first minister of Sweden, the famous Marshal Rehnskiöld, Count Löwenhaupt, the generals Schlippenbach, Stackelberg, and Hamilton, and all the officers and soldiers who were afterwards dispersed through Great Russia. Immediately after these appeared the czar himself, mounted on the same horse which he rode at the battle of Poltava. A little after him came the generals who had had a share in the success of the day. Next followed a regiment of guards, and the whole was closed by the wagons loaded with the Swedish ammunition.

This grand procession was accompanied with the ringing of all the bells in Moscow, with the sound of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, and an infinite number of musical instruments, which played in concert, together with the volleys of two hundred pieces of cannon, amid the acclamations of five hundred thousand men, who, at every stop the czar made in this triumphal entry, cried out, "Long live the emperor, our father!"

This dazzling exhibition augmented the people's veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than all the solid advantages they had derived from his labors. Meanwhile he continued the blockade of Riga; and

[1] Here M. Norberg, the confessor of Charles XII, finds fault with the author, and affirms that the litter was carried by the soldiers. With regard to these circumstances (which are of great importance, to be sure), we appeal to those who saw them.

the generals made themselves masters of the rest of Livonia and part of Finland. At the same time, the King of Denmark came with his whole fleet to make a descent upon Sweden, where he landed seventeen thousand men, and left them under the command of Count Reventlau.

Sweden was, at that time, governed by a regency, composed of some senators, who were appointed by the king before he left Stockholm. The body of the senate, imagining that the government of right belonged to them, became jealous of the regency; and the State suffered by these divisions. But when, after the battle of Poltava, the first news was brought to Stockholm, that the king was at Bender, at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had invaded Scania, and taken the town of Helsingborg, all their jealousies immediately vanished, and they bent their whole attention towards the preservation of the kingdom. Sweden was now drained, in a great measure, of regular troops; for though Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had fought in the space of nine years, the necessity he was under of recruiting his forces with continual supplies, and maintaining his garrisons, and the standing army he was constantly obliged to keep in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen, and Verden, had cost Sweden, during the course of the war, above two hundred and fifty thousand men; so that there were not eight thousand of the ancient troops remaining, which, together with the newly raised militia, was the only resource Sweden had to trust to for the defence of her territories.

The nation is naturally warlike; and every people insensibly imbibes the spirit of the sovereign. From one end of the country to the other, nothing was talked of but the prodigious achievements of Charles and his generals, and of the old regiments that fought under them at Narva, Düina, Clissow, Pultusk, and Holowczyn. Hence the very lowest of the Swedes were fired with a spirit of emulation and glory; and this heroic impulse was greatly augmented by their affection for their king, their pity for his misfortunes, and their implacable

hatred of the Danes. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such; but here they compose a part of the State, are considered as citizens, and, of consequence, are capable of more exalted sentiments; so that these newly raised militia became, in a short time, the best troops of the North.

General Stenbock, by order of the regency, put himself at the head of eight thousand of the ancient troops, and about twelve thousand of these new militia, to go in pursuit of the Danes, who ravaged all the country about Helsingborg, and had already extorted contributions from some of the more inland provinces.

There was neither time nor opportunity to give regimental clothes to the new militia. Most of these boors came in their flaxen frocks, having pistols tied to their girdles with cords. Stenbock, at the head of this strange army, overtook the Danes about three leagues from Helsingborg on the tenth of March, 1710. He had designed to give his troops a few days rest, to raise intrenchments, and to allow his new soldiers sufficient time to habituate themselves to the face of the enemy; but all the peasants called out for battle the very day on which they arrived.

I have been assured by some of the officers who were present, that they saw almost every individual soldier foaming with rage; so great is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Stenbock availed himself of this ardor of spirit, which, in the day of battle, is of as much consequence as military discipline. He attacked the Danes; and there one might have seen a thing, to which, perhaps, the whole history of mankind cannot furnish above two similar examples: the newly raised militia, in their first assault, equalled the intrepidity of veteran soldiers. Two regiments of these undisciplined peasants cut in pieces the regiment of the King of Denmark's guards, of which there remained only ten men alive.

The Danes, being entirely routed, retired under the cannon of Helsingborg. The passage from Sweden to Zealand is so short, that the King of Denmark received the news of the defeat of his army in Sweden the same day on which it hap-

pened, and sent his fleet to bring off the shattered remains of his army. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle; but unable to carry off their horses, and unwilling to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the suburbs of Helsingborg, and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving in Helsingborg four thousand wounded, the greater part of whom died with the infection occasioned by so many dead horses, and for want of provision, of which even their countrymen deprived them, in order to prevent the Swedes from enjoying any share of it.

Meanwhile the peasants of Dalecarlia, having heard in the heart of their forests that their king was a prisoner among the Turks, sent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm, and offered to go at their own expense, to the number of twenty thousand men, to rescue their master from the hands of his enemies. This proposal, which was better calculated to express their courage and loyalty, than to produce any real advantage, was received with pleasure, though it was not accepted; and the senators took care to acquaint the king with it, at the same time that they sent him a circumstantial account of the battle of Helsingborg.

Charles received this agreeable news in his camp near Bender, in July, 1710. And another event that happened soon after, contributed still more to strengthen his hopes.

The grand-vizier, Couprougli, who opposed all his designs, was dismissed from his office, after having filled it for two months. The little court of Charles XII, and those who still adhered to him in Poland, gave out that Charles made and unmade the viziers, and governed the Turkish empire from his retreat at Bender. But he had no hand in the disgrace of that favorite. The rigid probity of the vizier was said to have been the sole cause of his fall. His predecessor had paid the Janizaries, not out of the imperial treasury, but with the money which he procured by extortion. Couprougli paid them out of the treasury. Achmet reproached him with preferring the interest of the subject to that of the emperor. "Your predecessor," said he, "well knew how to find other means of pay-

ing my troops." "If," replied the grand-vizier, "he had the art of enriching your highness by rapine, it is an art of which I am proud to say I am entirely ignorant."

The profound secrecy that prevails in the seraglio seldom allows such particulars to transpire to the public; but this fact was published along with Couprougli's disgrace. The vizier's boldness did not cost him his head, because true virtue is sometimes respected, even while it displeases. He was permitted to retire to the island of Negropont. These particulars I learned from the letters of M. Bru, my relation, first druggist to the Ottoman Porte, and I have retold them in order to display the true spirit of that government.

After this the Grand Seignior recalled from Aleppo, Baltagi [Baltadschi] Mehemet, pasha of Syria, who had been grand-vizier before Chourlouli. The baltagis of the seraglio, so called from *balta*, which signifies an *axe*, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the princes of the Ottoman blood, and the sultanas. This vizier had been a baltagi in his youth, and had ever since retained the name of that office, according to the custom of the Turks, who are not ashamed to take the name of their first profession, or of that of their father, or even of the place of their birth.

While Baltagi Mehemet was a valet in the seraglio, he was so happy as to perform some little services to Prince Achmet, who was then a prisoner of state, in the reign of his brother Mustapha. The princes of the Ottoman blood are allowed to keep for their pleasure a few women, who are past the age of child-bearing (and that age arrives very early in Turkey), but still agreeable enough to please. As soon as Achmet became sultan, he gave one of these female slaves, for whom he had had a great affection, in marriage to Baltagi Mehemet. This woman, by her intrigues, made her husband grand-vizier; another intrigue displaced him; and a third made him grand-vizier again.

When Baltagi Mehemet received the bull of the empire, he found the party of the King of Sweden prevailing in the seraglio. The Sultaness Valide, Ali Coumourgi, the Grand

Seignior's favorite, the kislar aga, chief of the black eunuchs, and the aga of the Janizaries, were all for a war against the czar: the sultan was fixed in the same resolution, and the first order he gave the grand-vizier was to go and attack the Muscovites with two hundred thousand men. Baltagi had never made a campaign; yet was he not an idiot, as the Swedes, who were dissatisfied with his conduct, affected to represent him. Upon receiving from the Grand Seignior a sabre, adorned with precious stones, he addressed him in the following terms: "Your highness knows that I was brought up to handle an axe and cleave wood, not to wield a sword and command your armies. Nevertheless, I will endeavor to serve you to the best of my power; but should I fail of success, remember I have entreated you beforehand not to impute the blame to me." The sultan assured him he might depend upon his friendship, and the vizier prepared to carry his orders into execution.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was to imprison the Russian ambassador in the castle of the Seven Towers. It is the custom of the Turks to begin by arresting the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Strict observers of hospitality in every thing else, in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. This injustice, however, they commit under the pretext of equity, believing themselves, or, at least, desirous of making others believe, that they never undertake any but just wars, because they are consecrated by the approbation of their mufti. Upon this principle they take up arms (as they imagine) to chastise the violators of treaties, and think they have a right to punish the ambassadors of those kings with whom they are at enmity, as being accomplices in the treachery of their masters. Add to this, the ridiculous contempt they affect to entertain for Christian princes and their ambassadors, the latter of whom they commonly consider in no other light than as the consuls of merchants.

The Khan of Crim Tartary received orders to hold himself in readiness with forty thousand Tartars. This prince is sovereign of Nagai [?], Budziack [Badakshan ?], part of Circassia, and all of the Crimea, a province anciently known by the

name of Taurica Chersonesus, into which the Greeks carried their arms and commerce, and founded powerful cities; and into which, in after-times, the Geonese penetrated, when they were masters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be seen the ruins of some Greek cities, and some monuments of the Geonese, which still subsist in the midst of desolation and barbarity.

The khan is called emperor by his own subjects; but, with this grand title, he is, nevertheless, the slave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, from which the khans are sprung, and the right they pretend to have to the empire of the Turks, upon the failure of the Grand Seignior's race, render their family respectable, and their persons formidable even to the sultan himself. It is for this reason that the Grand Seignior dares not destroy the race of the khans of Tartary; though indeed he seldom allows any of these princes to live to a great age. Their conduct is closely inspected by the neighboring pashas; their dominions are surrounded with Janizaries, their inclinations thwarted by the grand-viziers, and their designs always suspected. If the Tartars complain of the khan, the Porte deposes him under that pretext. If he is too popular, it is still a higher crime, for which he suffers a more severe punishment. Thus almost all of them are driven from sovereign power into exile, and end their days at Rhodes, which is commonly their prison and their grave.

The Tartars, their subjects, are the most thievish people on earth, and, what is hardly to be credited, are at the same time the most hospitable. They will go fifty leagues from home to attack a caravan, or pillage a town; and yet when any stranger happens to travel through their country, he is not only received, lodged, and maintained everywhere, but through whatever place he passes, the inhabitants dispute with each other the honor of having him for their guest; and the master of the house, his wife, and daughters, are ambitious to serve him. This inviolable regard to hospitality they have derived from their ancestors, the Scythians; and they still preserve it, because the small number of strangers that travel among them,

and the low price of all sorts of provisions, render the practice of such a virtue in no way burdensome.

When the Tartars go to war, in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the Grand Seignior, but the booty they get is their only pay; and hence it is that they are much fitter for plundering than fighting.

The khan, won over to the King of Sweden's interest by presents and promises, at first obtained leave to appoint the general rendezvous of the troops at Bender, and even under the eye of Charles XII, in order the more effectually to convince that monarch that the war was undertaken solely for his sake.

The new vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, who did not lie under the same engagements, would not flatter a sovereign prince so highly. He changed the order, and Adrianople was the place fixed for the rendezvous of this great army. It is always in the vast and fertile plains of Adrianople that the Turks assemble their armies, when they are going to make war upon the Christians; there the troops that arrive from Asia and Africa repose and refresh themselves for a few weeks; but the grand-vizier, in order to anticipate the preparations of the czar, allowed the army but three days' rest, and then marched to the Danube, from whence he advanced into Bessarabia.

The Turkish troops at present are not so formidable as they were in former times, when they conquered so many kingdoms in Asia, Africa, and Europe; when, by their great strength of body, their valor, and numbers, they triumphed over enemies less robust and worse disciplined than themselves. But now that the Christians are more expert in the art of war, they seldom fail to beat the Turks in a pitched battle, and even with unequal numbers. If the Ottoman empire has made some conquests in latter times, it has only been over the republic of Venice, esteemed more wise than warlike, defended by strangers, and little succored by the Christian princes, who are perpetually at variance among themselves.

The Janizaries and Saphis always attack in a confused and disorderly manner; they are incapable of obeying the com-

mands of their general, or of recovering their ranks. Their cavalry, which, considering the goodness and fleetness of their horses, ought to be excellent, is unable to sustain the shock of the German cavalry. Their infantry cannot, even to this day, make use of fixed bayonets to any purpose. Add to this, that the Turks have not had an able general since the time of Couprougli, who conquered the Isle of Candia. A slave, brought up in the indolence and silence of a seraglio, made a vizier by interest, and a general against his will, led a raw army, without discipline or experience, against Russian troops, hardened by twelve campaigns, and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The czar, in all appearance, must have vanquished Baltagi Mehemet; but he was guilty of the same fault, in regard to the Turks, which the King of Sweden had committed with regard to him: he despised his enemy too much. Upon the first news of the Turkish preparations, he left Moscow, and, having given orders for turning the siege of Riga into a blockade, assembled a body of eighty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland.[1] With this army he took the road through Moldavia and Walachia, formerly the country of the Dacians, but now inhabited by Greek Christians, who are tributaries to the Grand Seignior.

Moldavia was, at that time, governed by Prince Cantemir, a Grecian by birth, and who united in his person the talents of the ancient Greeks, the knowledge of letters and of arms. He was supposed to have sprung from the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This extraction appeared more honorable than a Greek origin; and the reality of the descent is proved by the name of the conqueror. Timur, it is said, resembles Temir; the title of khan, which Timur possessed before he conquered Asia, is included in the word Cantemir;

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[1] The chaplain Norberg alleges, that the czar compelled every fourth man in his dominions, able to bear arms, to follow him to the field. Had that been the case, his army would have amounted, at least, to two millions of men.

therefore Prince Cantemir is descended from Tamerlane. Such are the foundations of most genealogies!

From whatever family Cantemir was sprung, he owed all his fortune to the Ottoman Porte. Hardly had he received the investiture of his principality, when he betrayed his benefactor, the Turkish emperor, to the czar, from whom he expected greater advantages. He fondly imagined that the conqueror of Charles XII would easily triumph over a vizier of so little reputation, who had never made a campaign, and who had chosen for his kiaia, or lieutenant, the superintendent of the customs in Turkey. He made no question but all his subjects would readily follow his standard, as the Greek patriarchs encouraged him in his revolt. The czar, therefore, having made a secret treaty with this prince, and received him into his army, advanced further into the country; and in June, 1711, arrived on the northern banks of the river Hierasus, now Pruth, near Jassy, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the grand-vizier heard that Peter Alexiovitch was advancing on that side, he immediately decamped, and following the course of the Danube, resolved to cross the river on a bridge of boats, near a town called Saccia, at the same place where Darius formerly built the bridge that long went by his name. The Turkish army proceeded with so much expedition, that it soon came in sight of the Muscovites, the river Pruth being between them.

The czar, sure of the Prince of Moldavia, never dreamed that the Moldavians would fail him. But it frequently happens that the interest of the prince and that of the subjects are extremely different. The Moldavians liked the Turkish government, which is never fatal to any but the grandees, and affects a great lenity and mildness to its tributary States. They dreaded the Christians, and especially the Muscovites, who had always treated them with inhumanity. They carried all their provisions to the Ottoman army.

The undertakers who had engaged to furnish the Russians with provisions, performed that contract with the grand-vizier which they had made with the czar. The Walachians, who

border upon the Moldavians, showed the same attachment to the Turks; so much had the remembrance of the Russian cruelty alienated all their affections.

The czar thus baulked of his hopes, which perhaps he had too rashly entertained, saw his army on a sudden destitute of forage and provisions. The soldiers deserted in troops, and the army was soon reduced to less than thirty thousand men, ready to perish with hunger. The czar experienced the same misfortunes upon the banks of the Pruth, in having delivered himself up to Cantemir, that Charles XII had done at Poltava, in relying upon Mazeppa. The Turks meanwhile passed the river, hemmed in the Russians, and formed an intrenched camp before them. It is somewhat surprising that the czar did not dispute the passage of the river, or, at least, repair this error by attacking the Turks immediately after the passage, instead of giving them time to destroy his army with hunger and fatigue. It would seem, indeed, that Peter did every thing in this campaign to hasten his own ruin. He found himself without provision; the river Pruth was behind him; a hundred and fifty thousand Turks were before him; while forty thousand Tartars were continually harassing his army on the right and left. In this extremity, he made no scruple of acknowledging in public that he was at least reduced to as bad a condition as his brother Charles had been at Poltava.

Count Poniatowski, an indefatigable agent of the King of Sweden, was in the grand-vizier's army, together with some Poles and Swedes, all of whom considered the ruin of the czar as inevitable.

As soon as Poniatowski saw that the armies must infallibly come to an engagement, he sent an express to the King of Sweden, who immediately set out from Bender, accompanied with forty officers, anticipating the mighty pleasure he should have in fighting the Emperor of Muscovy. After many losses, and several marches in which he suffered severely, the czar was driven back to the Pruth, without any other defence than a chevaux-de-frise and a few wagons. A part of the Janizaries and Saphis attacked his army in this disadvantageous

situation; but their attack was disorderly, and the Russians defended themselves with a firmness and resolution which nothing but despair and the presence of their prince could inspire.

The Turks were twice repulsed. Next day Poniatowski advised the grand-vizier to starve the Russian army, which being in want of every thing, would, together with its emperor, be obliged in a day's time to surrender at discretion.

The czar, since that time, has more than once acknowledged, that, in the whole course of his life, he never felt any thing so exquisitely tormenting as the perturbation of mind in which he passed that night. He revolved in his thoughts all that he had been doing for so many years to promote the glory and happiness of his country. He reflected that so many grand undertakings, which had always been interrupted by wars, were now, perhaps, going to perish with him before they were fully accomplished. And he plainly perceived that he must either be destroyed by famine, or attack about a hundred and eighty thousand men with feeble and dispirited troops, diminished one half in their number, the cavalry almost entirely dismounted, and the infantry exhausted with hunger and fatigue.

He sent for General Sheremetef in the evening, and, without the least hesitation, or even so much as asking any one's advice, ordered him to have every thing in readiness next morning for attacking the Turks with fixed bayonets.

He likewise gave express orders that all baggage should be burnt, and that no officer should keep above one wagon; that so, in case of a defeat, the enemy might not obtain the booty they expected.

Having settled every thing with the general relating to the battle, he retired to his tent, oppressed with grief, and racked with convulsions, a disease which often attacked him, and always recurred with redoubled violence when he was under any perturbation of mind. He gave peremptory orders that no one should presume, under any pretext whatsoever, to enter his tent in the night; not choosing to receive any remon-

strances against a resolution, which, however desperate, was absolutely necessary, and still less that any one should be a witness of the melancholy condition in which he was.

Meanwhile the greatest part of the baggage was burnt, according to his orders. All the army followed the example, though with much reluctance; and several buried their most valuable effects in the earth. The general officers were already giving orders for the march, and endeavoring to inspire the army with that courage which they did not possess themselves. The soldiers, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, advanced without spirit and without hope. The women, with which the army was but too much crowded, set up the most lamentable shrieks and cries, which contributed still more to enervate the men; and the next morning every one expected death or slavery, as the only alternative. This picture is by no means exaggerated; it is exactly according to the accounts that were given by some officers who served in the army.

There was, at that time, in the Russian camp, a woman as extraordinary, perhaps, as the czar himself. As yet she was known only by the name of Catharine. Her mother was a poor country woman, called Erb-Magden, of the village of Ringen in Estonia, a province where the people are serfs, and which was then subject to the Swedes. She never knew her father, but was baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the parish, out of pure charity, brought her up to the age of fourteen; after which she went to service at Marienburg, and hired herself to a Lutheran minister of that country, called Gluk.

In 1702, being then eighteen years of age, she married a Swedish dragoon. The day immediately succeeding her marriage, a party of the Swedish troops having been defeated by the Muscovites, the dragoon, who was in the action, disappeared, and was never heard of more; but whether or not he was taken prisoner, his wife could never learn, nor indeed from that time could she ever procure the least intelligence about him.

A few days after, being made a prisoner herself by General Bauer, she entered into his service, and afterwards into that of

Marshal Sheremetef, by whom she was given to Mentchikof, a man who experienced the greatest vicissitudes of fortune, having from a pastry-cook's boy been raised to the rank of a general and a prince, and at last stripped of every thing and banished into Siberia, where he ended his days in misery and despair.

The first time the emperor saw her was one evening as he was at supper with Prince Mentchikof, when he instantly fell in love with her. He married her privately in 1707; not seduced into this step by the artifices of the woman, but because he found her possessed of a strength and firmness of mind capable of seconding his schemes, and even of continuing them after his death. He had long before divorced his first wife Ottokefa, the daughter of a Boyard, who was accused of opposing the alterations which he was introducing into his dominions. This crime, in the eyes of the czar, was the most heinous of all others. He would have nobody in his family whose thoughts did not exactly correspond with his own. He imagined he could discern in this foreign slave the qualities of a sovereign, though she had none of the virtues of her sex. For her sake he disdained and broke through the prejudices that would have fettered a man of ordinary capacity. He caused her to be crowned empress. The same talents which made her the wife of Peter Alexiovitch, procured her the empire after the death of her husband; and Europe has seen with surprise a woman who could neither read nor write,[1] compensating the want of education, and the weakness of her sex, by her invincible courage and resolution, and filling with glory the throne of a legislator.

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[1] The Sieur de la Motraye pretends that she had a good education, and could both read and write with great facility. The contrary of this, however, is known to all the world. The peasants of Livonia are never allowed to learn either to read or write, owing to an ancient privilege, which is termed *the benefit of clergy*, formerly established among the barbarians who were converted to Christianity, and still subsisting in this country. The memoirs from which we have extracted this anecdote, further add, that the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards empress, always signed for her mother from the time she could write.

When she married the czar, she renounced the Lutheran religion, in which she had been born, and embraced that of Muscovy. She was re-baptized, according to the rules of the Russian Church, and instead of Martha, she took the name of Catharine, by which she was ever after known. This woman, being in the camp at Pruth, held a council with the general officers and the vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, while the czar was in his tent.

The result of their deliberations was, that they must necessarily sue for a peace to the Turks, and endeavor to persuade the czar to agree to such a measure. The vice-chancellor wrote a letter to the grand-vizier in his master's name. This letter the czarina carried to the emperor's tent, notwithstanding his prohibition; and having with tears and entreaties prevailed upon him to sign it, she forthwith collected all her jewels, money, and most valuable effects, together with what money she could borrow from the general officers, and having by these means made up a considerable present, she sent it, with the czar's letter, to Osman aga, lieutenant to the grand-vizier. Mehemet Baltagi replied with the lofty air of a vizier and a conqueror: "Let the czar send me his prime minister, and I shall then consider what is to be done." The vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, immediately repaired to the Turkish camp, with some presents which he publicly offered to the grand-vizier, sufficient to show him that they stood in need of his clemency, but too inconsiderable to corrupt his integrity.

The vizier at first demanded, that the czar, with his whole army, should surrender at discretion. The vice-chancellor replied, that his master was going to attack him in a quarter of an hour, and that the Russians would perish to a man, rather than submit to such dishonorable conditions. Schaffirof's application was strongly seconded by the remonstrances of Osman.

Mehemet Baltagi was no warrior: he saw that the Janizaries had been repulsed the day before; so that Osman easily prevailed upon him not to risk such certain advantages upon the fate of a battle. He accordingly granted a suspension of

arms for six hours, in which time the terms of the treaty might be fully settled.

During the parley, there happened a trifling incident, which plainly shows that the Turks often keep their word with a more scrupulous exactness than we imagine. Two Italian gentlemen, relations of M. Brillo, lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the czar's service, having gone to some distance in quest of forage, were taken prisoners by some Tartars, who brought them to the camp, and offered to sell them to an officer of the Janizaries. The Turk, enraged at their presumption, in having thus violated the truce, arrested the Tartars, and carried them himself before the grand-vizier, together with the two prisoners.

The vizier sent back the two gentlemen to the czar's camp, and ordered the Tartars, who had been chiefly concerned in carrying them off, to be beheaded.

Meanwhile, the khan of Tartary opposed the conclusion of the treaty, which would deprive him of all hopes of plunder; and Poniatowski seconded the khan with the strongest arguments. But Osman carried his point against the importunity of the Tartar, and the insinuations of Poniatowski.

The vizier thought, that, by concluding an advantageous peace, he would sufficiently consult the honor and interest of his master. He insisted that the Russians should restore Azof, burn the galleys which lay in that harbor, demolish the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis [Sea of Azof], and deliver all the cannon and ammunition of these fortresses into the hands of the Grand Seignor; that the czar should withdraw his troops from Poland, give no further disturbance to the few Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor to those who were subject to the Turks; and that, for the future, he should pay the Tartars an annual subsidy of forty thousand sequins,—an odious tribute long since imposed, but from which the czar had delivered his country.

At last the treaty was going to be signed, without so much as making mention of the King of Sweden. All that Poniatowski could obtain of the vizier was to insert an article, by

which the czar bound himself not to incommodate the king in his return. And what is very remarkable, it was stipulated in this article, that the czar and Charles should make peace if they thought proper, and could agree upon the terms.

On these conditions the czar was permitted to retire with his army, cannon, artillery, colors, and baggage. The Turks supplied him with provisions, and he had plenty of every thing in his camp two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded, and signed the 21st of July, 1711.

Just as the czar, now extricated from this terrible dilemma, was marching off, with drums beating and colors flying, the King of Sweden arrived impatient for the fight, and happy in the thoughts of having his enemy in his power. He had ridden post above fifty leagues from Bender to Jassy. He arrived the very moment that the Russians were beginning to retire in peace; but he could not penetrate to the Turkish camp, without passing the Pruth by a bridge, three leagues distant. Charles XII, who never did any thing like other men, swam across the river, at the hazard of being drowned, and traversed the Russian camp at the risk of being taken. At length he reached the Turkish army, and alighted at the tent of Poniatowski, who informed me of all these particulars, both by letter and word of mouth. The count came to him with a sorrowful countenance, and told him that he had lost an opportunity, which, perhaps, he would never be able to recover.

The king, inflamed with resentment, flew straight away to the tent of the grand-vizier, and, with a stern air, reproached him for the treaty he had made. "I have a right," said the grand-vizier, with a calm aspect, "either to make peace or war." "But," added the king, "have you not the whole Russian army in your power?" "Our law commands us," replied the vizier, with great gravity, "to grant peace to our enemies, when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you," resumed the king in a passion, "to make a bad treaty, when you may impose what laws you please? Had you not a fair opportunity, if you would have embraced it, of leading the czar a prisoner to Constantinople?"

The Turk, driven to this extremity, replied very coldly: "And who would have governed his empire in his absence? It is not proper that all kings should leave their dominions." Charles made no other answer than by a smile of indignation. He then threw himself down upon a sofa, and eying the vizier with an air of contempt and resentment, stretched out his leg, and entangling his spur in the Turk's robe, purposely tore it, after which, he rose up, remounted his horse, and with a sorrowful heart returned to Bender. Poniatowski continued some time longer with the grand-vizier, to try if he could not prevail upon him, by more gentle means, to extort greater concessions from the czar; but the hour of prayer having arrived, the Turk, without answering a single word, went to wash and attend divine service.

BOOK VI.

Intrignes at the Porte. The Khan of Tartary and the Pasha of Bender endeavor to force Charles to depart. He defends himself with forty domestics against the whole army. He is taken, and treated as a prisoner.

THE fortune of the King of Sweden, now so different from what it had formerly been, harassed him even in the most trifling circumstances. On his return, he found his little camp at Bender, and all his apartments, overflowed by the waters of the Dniester. He retired to the distance of a few miles, near the village of Varnitza; and, as if he had had a secret foreboding of what was to befall him, he there built a large house of stone, capable, on occasion, of sustaining an assault for a few hours. He even furnished it in a magnificent manner, contrary to his usual custom, in order the more effectually to attract the respect of the Turks.

He likewise built two other houses,—one for his chancery, and the other for his favorite Grothusen, who kept a table at the king's expense. While Charles was thus employed in building near Bender, as if he had been always to remain in Turkey, Baltagi Mehemet, dreading more than ever the intrigues and complaints of this prince at the Porte, had sent the resident of the Emperor of Germany into Vienna to demand a free passage for the King of Sweden through the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria. The envoy, in the space of three weeks, brought back a promise from the imperial regency, importing that they would pay Charles XII all due honors, and conduct him safely into Pomerania.

Application was made to the regency of Vienna, because

Charles, the emperor of Germany, who had succeeded Joseph, was then in Spain, disputing the crown of that kingdom with Philip V. While the German envoy was executing this commission at Vienna, the grand-vizier sent three pashas to acquaint the King of Sweden, that he must quit the Turkish dominions.

The king, being previously apprised of the orders with which they were charged, caused intimation to be given them, that if they presumed to make him any proposals contrary to his honor, or to the respect that was due to his character, he would forthwith have them all strung up on a gallows. The pasha of Salonica, who delivered the message, disguised the harshness of the commission under the most respectful terms. Charles put an end to the audience, without deigning to give them an answer. His chancellor, Muller, who remained with the three pashas, briefly explained to them his master's refusal, which indeed they had sufficiently understood by his profound silence.

The grand-vizier was not to be diverted from his purpose; he ordered Ismael Pasha, the new seraskier of Bender, to threaten the king with the sultan's indignation, if he did not immediately come to a resolution. The seraskier was a man of mild temper and engaging address, which had gained him the good-will of Charles, and the friendship of all the Swedes. The king entered into a conference with him; but it was only to tell him, that he would not depart until Achmet had granted him two favors,—the punishment of his grand-vizier, and a hundred thousand men to conduct him back to Poland.

Baltagi Mehemet was aware that Charles remained in Turkey only to ruin him. He therefore took care to place guards in all the roads from Bender to Constantinople, to intercept the king's letters. He did more; he retrenched his thaim, that is to say, the provision which the Porte allows those princes to whom she grants an asylum. That of the King of Sweden was immense, consisting of five hundred crowns a day in money, and a profusion of every thing necessary to maintain a court in splendor and affluence.

As soon as the king was informed that the vizier had presumed to retrench his allowance, he turned to the steward of his household and said: "Hitherto you have only had two tables, I command you to have four for the future."

The officers of Charles XII had been used to find nothing impossible which their master ordered; at present, however, they had neither money nor provisions. They were forced to borrow at twenty, thirty, and forty per cent. of the officers, domestics, and Janizaries, who had grown rich by the king's profusion. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, Jeffreys, the English minister, and their secretaries and friends, gave all that they had. The king, with his usual stateliness, and without any concern about the morrow, lived on these presents, which could not have sufficed him long. It was necessary to elude the vigilance of the guards, and to send privately to Constantinople to borrow money of the European merchants. But everybody refused to lend to a king who seemed to have put himself out of a condition of ever being able to repay them. One English merchant alone, called Cook, ventured to lend him about forty thousand crowns, content to lose that sum if the King of Sweden should happen to die. This money was brought to the king's little camp, just as they began to be in want of every thing, and even to give over all hopes of any further relief.

During this interval, Poniatowski wrote, even from the camp of the grand-vizier, an account of the campaign at Pruth, in which he accused Baltagi Mehemet of perfidy and cowardice. An old Janizary, provoked at the vizier's weakness, and gained moreover by Poniatowski's liberality, undertook the delivery of the letter; and having obtained leave, presented it with his own hand to the sultan.

A few days after, Poniatowski left the camp, and repaired to the Porte to form cabals, as usual, against the grand-vizier.

Every thing favored his project. The czar, being now at liberty, was in no haste to perform his engagements. The keys of Azof had not yet arrived; the grand-vizier was answerable for them, and justly dreading the indignation of his master, durst not venture to appear in his presence.

At that time the seraglio was filled more than ever with intrigues and factions. These cabals, which prevail in all courts, and which in ours commonly end in the dismission, or, at most, in the banishment of the minister, never fail at Constantinople to occasion the loss of more than one head. The present plot proved fatal to the old vizier, Chourlouli, and to Osman, the lieutenant of Baltagi Mehemet, who had been the principal author of the peace of Pruth, and had afterwards obtained a considerable post at the Porte. Among Osman's treasures was found the czarina's ring, and twenty thousand pieces of gold, of Saxon and Russian coin; a plain proof that money alone had extricated the czar from his dangerous situation, and ruined the fortunes of Charles. The vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, was banished to the Isle of Lemnos, where he died three years afterwards. The sultan did not seize his effects, either at his banishment or his death. He was far from being rich; and his poverty was a sufficient vindication of his character.

This grand-vizier was succeeded by Jussuf, or Joseph, whose fortune was as singular as that of his predecessors. Born on the frontiers of Muscovy, and taken prisoner at six years of age, with his family, he had been sold to a Janizary. He was long a servant in the seraglio, and at last became the second person in the empire where he had been a slave; but he was only the shadow of a minister. The young selictar, Ali Coumourgi, raised him to that slippery post, in hopes of one day filling it himself; and Jussuf, his creature, had nothing to do but to set the seals of the empire to whatever the favorite desired. From the very beginning of this vizier's ministry, the politics of the Ottoman court seemed to undergo a total alteration. The czar's plenipotentiaries, who resided at Constantinople, either as ministers or hostages, were treated with greater civility than ever. The grand-vizier confirmed with them the peace of Pruth; but what mortified the King of Sweden more than all the rest was to hear that the secret alliance, made with the czar at Constantinople, was brought about by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors.

Constantinople, from the time of Charles's retreat to Bender,

had become what Rome has often been, the centre of the negotiations of Christendom. Count Désaleurs, the French ambassador at the Porte, supported the interests of Charles and Stanislaus; the Emperor of Germany's minister opposed them; and the factions of Sweden and Muscovy clashed, as those of France and Spain have long done at the court of Rome.

England and Holland seemed to be neuter, but were not so in reality. The new trade which the czar had opened at Petersburg attracted the attention of these two commercial nations.

The English and the Dutch will always side with that prince who favors their trade the most. There were many advantages to be derived from a connection with the czar, and therefore it is no wonder that the ministers of England and Holland should serve him privately at the Porte. One of the conditions of this new alliance was, that Charles should be immediately obliged to quit the Turkish dominions, whether it was that the czar hoped to seize him on the road, or that he thought him less formidable in his own kingdom than in Turkey, where he was always on the point of arming the Ottoman troops against the Russian empire.

Charles was perpetually soliciting the Porte to send him back through Poland with a numerous army. The divan was resolved to send him back with a simple guard of seven or eight thousand men, not as a king whom they meant to assist, but as a guest of whom they wanted to get rid. For this purpose, the Sultan Achmet wrote him the following letter:

"*Most powerful among the kings that adore Jesus, redresser of wrongs and injuries in the ports and republics of the South and North, shining in majesty, lover of honor and glory, and of our sublime Porte, Charles, king of Sweden, whose enterprises may God crown with success:*

"As soon as the most illustrious Achmet, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, shall have the honor to deliver you this letter, adorned with our imperial seal, be persuaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions therein contained, viz., that though we had proposed once more to march our ever victorious army against the czar; yet that prince, in order to avoid the just resentment which he had conceived at his delaying to execute

the treaty concluded on the banks of the Pruth, and afterwards renewed at our sublime Porte, having surrendered into our hands the castle and city of Azof, and endeavored by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors, our ancient allies, to cultivate a lasting peace with us, we have granted his request, and delivered to his plenipotentiaries, who remain with us as hostages, our imperial ratification, after having received his from their hands.

"We have given to the most honorable and valiant Delvet Gherai, khan of Cudziack [?], Crimea, Nagai, Circassia, and to our most sage counsellor and noble seraskier of Bender, Ismael (whom God preserve and increase their magnificence and wisdom), our inviolable and salutary orders for your return through Poland, according to your first intention, which has again been presented to us in your name. You must, therefore, prepare to set out before next winter under the protection of Providence, and with an honorable guard, in order to return to your own territories, taking care to pass through those of Poland in a friendly manner.

"Whatever is necessary for your journey shall be furnished you by my sublime Porte, as well in money as in men, horses, and wagons. Above all things, we advise and exhort you, to give the most distinct and express orders to all the Swedes, and other persons in your retinue, to commit no outrage, nor be guilty of any action that may tend either directly or indirectly to break this peace and alliance.

"By these means you will preserve our good-will, of which we shall endeavor to give you as great and as frequent proofs as we shall have opportunities. The troops designed to attend you shall receive orders agreeable to our imperial intentions.

"Given at our sublime Porte of Constantinople, the fourteenth of the moon Rebyul Eurech, 1124, which answers to the 19th of April, 1712."

This letter did not deprive the King of Sweden of all hopes. He wrote to the sultan, that he should ever retain a grateful remembrance of the favors his highness had bestowed upon him; but that he believed the sultan was too just to send him back with the simple guard of a flying-camp into a country

that still swarmed with the czar's troops. And indeed the Emperor of Russia, notwithstanding the first article of the treaty of Pruth, by which he was obliged to withdraw all his troops from Poland, had sent fresh ones into that kingdom; and it is somewhat surprising that the Grand Seignior should be ignorant of this particular.

The bad policy of the Porte, in being so much guided by the motives of vanity as to allow Christian princes to have ambassadors at Constantinople, without ever sending a single agent to any Christian court, gives the latter an opportunity of discovering, and sometimes of directing the most secret resolutions of the sultan, and keeps the divan in a profound ignorance of what passes in the Christian world.

The sultan, shut up in his seraglio among his women and eunuchs, can only see with the eyes of his grand-vizier. That minister, as inaccessible as his master, his time wholly engrossed with the intrigues of his seraglio, and having no foreign correspondence, is commonly deceived himself, or else deceives the sultan, who deposes or causes him to be strangled for the first offence, in order to choose another minister as ignorant or as perfidious, who behaves like his predecessors, and soon shares the same fate.

So great, for the most part, is the inactivity and supine negligence of this court, that were the Christian princes to combine against it, their fleets might be at the Dardanelles, and their land forces at the gates of Adrianople, before the Turks would think of taking any measures for their defence; but their jarring interests, that must ever divide the Christian world, will preserve the Turks from a fate to which they seem at present exposed, by their want of policy, and by their ignorance of the art of war, both by sea and land.

So little was Achmet acquainted with what passed in Poland, that he sent an aga to inquire whether, in reality, the czar's troops were still in that country. The aga was accompanied by two secretaries of the King of Sweden, who understood the Turkish language, and were to serve as evidences against him, in case he should give in a false report.

The aga saw the Russian forces with his own eyes, and informed the sultan of every particular. Achmet, fired with indignation, was going to strangle the grand-vizier; but the favorite, who protected him, and who thought he should have further occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and supported him some time longer in the ministry.

The cause of the Russians was openly espoused by the vizier, and secretly favored by Ali Coumourgi, who had changed sides. But the sultan was so provoked, the infraction of the treaty was so manifest, and the Janizaries, who often make the ministers, the favorites, and even the sultans tremble, called out for war with so much importunity, that no one in the seraglio durst offer a more moderate proposal.

The Grand Seignior immediately committed to the Seven Towers the Russian ambassadors, who were already as much accustomed to go to prison as to an audience. War was declared afresh against the czar, the standards were displayed, and orders were given to all the pashas to assemble an army of two hundred thousand men. The sultan himself quitted Constantinople, and fixed his court at Adrianople, that he might be so much the nearer to the seat of the war.

Meanwhile a solemn embassy, sent to the Grand Seignior by Augustus and the republic of Poland, was upon the road to Adrianople. The Palatine of Massovia was at the head of this embassy, with a retinue of above three hundred persons.

All the members of the embassy were seized and imprisoned in one of the suburbs of the city. Never was the King of Sweden's party more highly flattered than on this occasion; and yet these great preparations were rendered abortive, and all their hopes were again disappointed.

If we may believe a public minister, a man of sagacity and penetration, who then resided at Constantinople, young Coumourgi had already found other designs than that of disputing a desert country with the czar, by a war, the event of which must have been so uncertain. He had resolved to strip the Venetians of Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, and to make himself master of Hungary.

These grand projects he proposed to carry into execution as soon as he should have attained the post of prime-vizier, from which he was still excluded on account of his youth. In this view, it was more for his advantage to be the ally than the enemy of the czar. It was neither his interest nor his inclination to keep the King of Sweden any longer, and much less to arm the Turkish empire in his favor. He not only resolved to dismiss that prince, but he openly declared that, for the future, no Christian minister should be allowed to reside at Constantinople; that all the common ambassadors were, at best, but honorable spies, who corrupted or betrayed the viziers, and had too long influenced the intrigues of the seraglio; and that the Franks settled at Pera, and in the seaports of the Levant, were merchants, who needed a consul only, and not an ambassador. The grand-vizier, who owed his post and even his life to the favorite, and who, besides, stood greatly in awe of him, complied with his intentions with so much the more alacrity, as he had sold himself to the Russians, and hoped by this means to be revenged on the King of Sweden, who had endeavored to ruin him. The mufti, a creature of Ali Coumourgi, was likewise an absolute slave to his will. He had been a keen advocate for a war with Russia when the favorite was of that opinion; but the moment Coumourgi changed his mind, he pronounced it to be unjust. Thus the army was hardly assembled when they began to listen to proposals of peace. The vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, and young Sheremetef, the czar's hostages and plenipotentiaries at the Porte, promised, after several negotiations, that their master should withdraw his troops from Poland. The grand-vizier, who well knew that the czar would never execute this treaty, made no scruple to sign it; and the sultan, satisfied with having, though only in appearance, imposed laws upon the Russians, continued still at Adrianople. Thus, in less than six months, peace was ratified with the czar, war declared, and peace renewed again.

The chief article of all these treaties was to oblige the King of Sweden to depart. The sultan was unwilling to endanger

his own honor, and that of the Ottoman empire, by exposing the king to the risk of being taken by his enemies on the road. It was stipulated that he should depart, but only on condition that the ambassadors of Poland and Muscovy should be responsible for the safety of his person. Accordingly these ambassadors swore, in the name of their masters, that neither the czar nor the King of Poland should molest him in his journey; and Charles was to engage, on his side, that he would not attempt to excite any commotions in Poland. The divan having thus settled the fate of Charles, Ismael, seraskier of Bender, repaired to Varnitza, where the king was encamped, and acquainted him with the resolutions of the Porte, insinuating to him, with great politeness, that there was no time for any longer delay, but that he must necessarily depart.

Charles made no other answer than this, that the Grand Seignior had promised him an army, and not a guard; and that kings ought to keep their word.

Meanwhile General Flemming, the minister and favorite of Augustus, maintained a secret correspondence with the khan of Tartary and the seraskier of Bender. La Mare, a French gentleman, a colonel in the service of Saxony, had made several journeys from Bender to Dresden; and all these journeys were strongly suspected.

At this very time, the King of Sweden caused a courier, whom Flemming had sent to the Prince of Tartary, to be arrested on the frontiers of Walachia. The letters were brought to him and deciphered, and from them it clearly appeared that a correspondence was carried on between the Tartars and the court of Dresden; but the letters were conceived in such ambiguous and general terms, that it was difficult to discover whether the intention of Augustus was only to detach the Turks from the interest of Sweden, or if he meant that the khan should deliver Charles to the Saxons as he conducted him back to Poland.

We can hardly imagine that a prince so generous as Augustus would, by seizing the person of the King of Sweden, endanger the lives of his ambassadors, and of three hundred

Polish gentlemen, who were detained at Adrianople as pledges of Charles's safety.

But it is well known, on the other hand, that Flemming, the minister of Augustus, and who had an absolute power over his master, was a man devoid of every principle of virtue or honor. The injuries which the elector had received from the King of Sweden might seem to excuse any kind of revenge; and it might be thought, that, if the court of Dresden could buy Charles from the khan of Tartary, they would find it no difficult matter to purchase the liberty of the Polish hostages at the Ottoman Porte.

These reasons were carefully canvassed by the king, Muller, his privy chancellor, and Grothusen, his favorite. They read the letters again and again; and their unhappy condition making them more suspicious, they resolved to believe the worst.

A few days after, the king was confirmed in his suspicions by the sudden departure of Count Sapieha, who had taken refuge with him, and now left him abruptly, in order to go to Poland to throw himself into the arms of Augustus. Upon any other occasion he would have considered Sapieha only as a malcontent; but in his present delicate situation, he at once concluded him to be a traitor. The repeated importunities with which he was pressed to depart converted his suspicions into certainty. The inflexible obstinacy of his temper, co-operating with these circumstances, confirmed him in the opinion that they intended to betray him and deliver him up to his enemies, though this plot has never been fully proved.

Perhaps he was mistaken in supposing that Augustus had made a bargain with the Tartars for his person; but he was much more deceived in relying on the assistance of the Ottoman court. Be that as it may, he resolved to gain time.

He told the pasha of Bender that he could not depart till he had received money to discharge his debts; for though his thaim had for a long time been duly paid, his unbounded liberality had always obliged him to borrow. The pasha asked him how much he wanted? The king replied, at a venture,

a thousand purses, amounting to fifteen hundred thousand livres, full weight. The pasha acquainted the Porte with his request. The sultan, instead of a thousand purses which Charles had required, granted him twelve hundred, and wrote the pasha the following letter:

The Grand Seignior's Letter to the Pasha of Bender.

"The design of this imperial letter is to acquaint you, that upon your representation and request, and upon that of the most noble Delvet Gherai Khan, to our Sublime Porte, our imperial munificence has granted a thousand purses to the King of Sweden, which shall be sent to Bender under the care and conduct of the most illustrious Mehemet Pasha, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, to remain in your custody till the departure of the King of Sweden, whose steps may God direct, and then to be given him, together with two hundred purses more, as an overplus of our imperial liberality, above what he demands.

"With regard to the route of Poland, which he is resolved to take, you and the khan, who are to attend him, shall be careful to pursue such wise and prudent measures as may, during the whole journey, prevent the troops under your command, as well as those of the King of Sweden, from committing any outrage, or being guilty of any action that may be deemed a violation of the peace which still subsists between our Sublime Porte and the kingdom and republic of Poland; so that the king may pass in a friendly manner under our protection.

"By doing this (which you must expressly require him to do), he will receive from the Poles all the honor and respect that is due to his majesty; as we have been assured by the ambassadors of Augustus and the republic, who, on this condition, have even offered themselves, together with several others of the Polish nobility, if required, as hostages for the security of his passage.

"When the time which you and the most noble Delvet Gherai shall fix for the march arrives, you shall put yourself at the head of your brave soldiers, among whom shall be the Tar-

tars, headed by the khan, and you shall conduct the King of Sweden and his men.

"And may it please the only God, the Almighty, to direct your steps and theirs. The pasha of Aulos shall continue at Bender with a regiment of Spahis and another of Janizaries, to defend it in your absence. And in the following our imperial orders and intentions in all these points and articles, you will deserve the continuance of our imperial favor, as well as the praise and recompense due to all those who observe them.

"Done at our imperial residence of Constantinople, the 2d of the moon Cheval, 1124, of the Hegira."

While they were waiting for this answer from the Grand Seignior, Charles wrote to the Porte, complaining of the treachery of which he suspected the khan of Tartary to be guilty; but all the passages were well guarded, and, moreover, the minister was against him, so that his letters never reached the sultan. Nay, the vizier would not allow M. Désaleurs to come to Adrianople, where the Porte then was, lest that minister, who was an agent of the King of Sweden, should endeavor to disconcert the plan he had formed for obliging him to depart.

Charles, enraged to see himself thus hunted, as it were, from the Grand Seignior's dominions, resolved not to quit them at all.

He might have desired to return through Germany, or to take ship on the Black Sea, in order to sail to Marseilles by the Mediterranean, but he rather chose to ask nothing, and to await the event.

When the twelve hundred purses had arrived, his treasurer Grothusen, who, during his long abode in Turkey, had learned the language of the country, went to wait upon the pasha without an interpreter, hoping to draw the money from him, and afterwards to form some new intrigue at the Porte, foolishly supposing, as he always did, that the Swedish party would at last be able to arm the Ottoman empire against the czar.

Grothusen told the pasha, that the king could not get ready his equipages without money. "But," said the pasha, "we

shall defray all the expenses of your departure; your master shall be at no charge while he continues under my protection."

Grothusen replied, that the difference between the equipages of the Turks and those of the Franks was so great, that they were obliged to apply to the Swedish and Polish artificers at Varnitza.

He assured him that his master was willing to depart, and that this money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The too credulous pasha gave the twelve hundred purses, and a few days after came to the king, and, in a most respectful manner, begged to receive his orders for his departure.

He was extremely surprised when the king told him he was not yet ready to go, and that he wanted a thousand purses more. The pasha, confounded at this answer, stood speechless for a moment; then retiring to a window, he was observed to shed some tears. At last, addressing himself to the king, "I shall lose my head," said he, "for having obliged your majesty; I have given you the twelve hundred purses against the express orders of my sovereign." So saying, he took his leave with a dejected countenance.

The king stopped him, and said that he would make an excuse for him to the sultan. "Ah," replied the Turk, as he was going away, "my master can punish faults, but cannot excuse them."

Ismael Pasha carried this piece of news to the khan, who having received the same orders with the pasha, not to suffer the twelve hundred purses to be given to the king before his departure, and having consented to the delivery of the money, was as apprehensive as the pasha of the Grand Seignior's indignation. They both wrote to the Porte in their own vindication, protesting they did not give the twelve hundred purses but upon a solemn promise from the king's minister that he would depart without delay, and beseeching his highness not to impute the king's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles, still persisting in the belief that the khan and pasha meant to deliver him up to his enemies, ordered Funk, who was then his envoy at the Ottoman court, to lay his complaints

against them before the sultan, and to ask a thousand purses more. His great generosity, and the little account he made of money, hindered him from perceiving the meanness of this proposal. He did it with a view to be refused, and in order to find a fresh pretext for delaying his departure. But a man must be reduced to strange extremities, to stand in need of such artifices. Savari, his interpreter, an artful and enterprising man, carried the letter to Adrianople, in spite of all the care which the grand-vizier had taken to guard the passes.

Funk was obliged to present this dangerous request. All the answer he received was to be thrown into prison. The sultan, in a passion, convoked an extraordinary divan, and, what very seldom happens, spoke himself on the occasion. His speech, according to the translation which was then made of it, was conceived in the following terms:

"I have scarcely known the King of Sweden but by his defeat at Poltava, and by the application he made to me to grant him an asylum in my dominions. I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor any reason either to love or fear him. Nevertheless, without consulting any other motives than the hospitality of a Mussulman, and my own generosity, which sheds the dew of its favors upon the great as well as the small, upon strangers as well as my own subjects, I have received and assisted him, his ministers, officers, and soldiers, and, for the space of three years and a half, have continued to load him with presents.

"I have granted him a considerable guard to conduct him back to his own kingdom. He asked a thousand purses to defray some expenses, though I pay them all: instead of a thousand, I granted him twelve hundred. After having got these out of the hands of the seraskier of Bender, he asks a thousand purses more, and refuses to depart, under a pretence that the guard is too small, whereas, in fact, it is but too large to pass through the country of a friend.

"I ask you, then, whether it be a violation of the laws of hospitality to send back this prince; and whether foreign powers ought to accuse me of cruelty and injustice, in case I hould be obliged to compel him to depart?" All the mem

bers of the divan answered, that such conduct would be consistent with the strictest rules of justice.

The mufti declared that Mussulmans were not bound to show any hospitality to infidels, and much less to the ungrateful; and he gave his fetfa, a kind of mandate which commonly accompanies the important orders of the Grand Seignior. These fetfas are revered as oracles, though the persons by whom they are given are as much slaves to the sultan as any others.

The order and the fetfa were carried to Bender by the *Bouyouk Imraour*, grand-master of the horse, and a *Chiaoux Pasha*, first usher. The pasha of Bender received the order at the lodgings of the Khan of Tartary; from whence he immediately repaired to Varnitza, to ask the king whether he would depart in a friendly manner, or lay him under the necessity of executing the sultan's orders.

Charles XII being thus menaced, could not restrain his passion. "Obey your master, if you dare," said he to the pasha, "and leave my presence immediately." The pasha, fired with indignation, returned at full gallop, contrary to the common custom of the Turks; and meeting Fabricius by the way, he called out to him, without halting: "The king will not listen to reason; you will see strange things presently." The same day he discontinued the supply of the king's provisions, and removed the guard of Janizaries. He caused intimation to be made to the Poles and Cossacks at Varnitza, that, if they had a mind to have any provisions, they must quit the King of Sweden's camp, repair to Bender, and put themselves under the protection of the Porte. These orders were readily obeyed by all, and the king was left without any other attendants than the officers of his household, and three hundred Swedish soldiers, to make head against twenty thousand Tartars and six thousand Turks.

There was now no provision in the camp either for man or horse. The king ordered twenty of the fine Arabian horses, which had been sent him by the Grand Seignior, to be shot without the camp, adding, "I will have none of their provisions nor their horses." This was an excellent feast to the Tar-

tars, who, as all the world knows, think horse-flesh delicious fare. Meanwhile the Turks and Tartars invested the king's little camp on all sides.

Charles, without the least discomposure, ordered his three hundred Swedes to raise regular intrenchments, in which work he himself assisted, as did likewise his chancellor, his treasurer, his secretaries, his *valets de chambre*, and all his domestics. Some barricaded the windows, and others fastened beams behind the doors, in the form of buttresses.

After the house was sufficiently barricaded, and the king had rode round his pretended fortifications, he sat down to chess with his favorite, Grothusen, with as much tranquillity as if every thing had been perfectly safe and secure. Happily Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but at a small village between Varnitza and Bender, where Jeffreys, the English envoy to the King of Sweden, likewise resided. These two ministers, seeing the storm ready to burst, undertook the office of mediators between the king and the Turks. The khan, and especially the pasha of Bender, who had no inclination to offer any violence to the Swedish monarch, received the offers of these two ministers with great satisfaction. They had two conferences at Bender, in which the usher of the seraglio, and the grand-master of the horse, who had brought the sultan's order, and the mufti's fetfa assisted.

Fabricius[1] declared to them that his Swedish majesty had good reason to believe that they designed to deliver him up to his enemies in Poland. The khan, the pasha, and all the rest, swore by their heads, and called God to witness, that they detested such a horrible piece of treachery, and that they would shed the last drop of their blood rather than suffer even the least disrespect to be shown to the king in Poland; adding, that they had in their hands the Russian and Polish ambassadors, whose lives should be answerable for any affront that should be offered to the King of Sweden. In fine, they

[1] The whole of this account is related by M. Fabricius in his letters.

complained bitterly that the king should entertain such injurious suspicions of those who had received and treated him with so much humanity and politeness.

Though oaths are frequently the language of treachery, Fabricius could not help being convinced of their sincerity. He thought he could discern in their protestations such an air of veracity as falsehood can, at best, but imperfectly imitate. He was aware there had been a secret correspondence between the Khan of Tartary and Augustus; but he was firmly persuaded that the only end of their negotiation was to oblige Charles XII to quit the dominions of the Grand Seignior. Whether Fabricius was mistaken or not, he assured them he would represent to the king the injustice of his suspicions. "But," added he, "do you intend to compel him to depart?" "Yes," said the pasha, "for such are the orders of our master." He then entreated them to consider seriously whether that order implied that they should shed the blood of a crowned head. "Yes," replied the khan, in a passion, "if that crowned head disobeys the Grand Seignior in his own dominions."

In the mean time, every thing being ready for the assault, the death of Charles XII seemed inevitable. But as the sultan had not given them positive orders to kill him in case of resistance, the pasha prevailed upon the khan to let him dispatch an express to Adrianople, where the Grand Seignior then resided, to receive the last orders of his highness.

Jeffreys and Fabricius, having procured this short respite, hastened to acquaint the king with it. They came with all the eagerness of people who bring good news, but were received very coldly. He called them unsolicited mediators, and still persisted in the belief that the sultan's order and the mufti's fetfa were both forged, inasmuch as they had sent to the Porte for fresh orders.

The English minister retired, with a firm resolution to interfere no more in the affairs of a prince so very obstinate and inflexible. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more accustomed to his humor than the English minister, remained with

him, and earnestly entreated him not to hazard so precious a life on such an unnecessary occasion.

For answer, the king showed him his fortifications, and begged he would employ his good offices in procuring him some provisions. The Turks were easily prevailed upon to allow provisions to be conveyed to the king's camp, until the return of the courier from Adrianople. The khan himself had strictly enjoined his Tartars, who were eager for pillage, not to make any attempt against the Swedes till the arrival of fresh orders; so that Charles XII went sometimes out of his camp with forty horse, and rode through the midst of the Tartars, who, with great respect, left him a free passage. He even marched directly up to their lines, which, instead of resisting, readily opened and allowed him to pass.

At last, the order of the Grand Seignior having arrived, to put to the sword all the Swedes that should make the least resistance, and not even to spare the life of the king, the pasha had the complaisance to show the order to Fabricius, with a view of inducing him to make his last effort to bend, if possible, the obstinacy of Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with these sad tidings. "Have you seen the order you mention?" said the king. "I have," replied Fabricius. "Well, then, go tell them in my name, that this second order is another forgery of theirs, and that I will not depart." Fabricius threw himself at his feet, fell into a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy; but all to no purpose. "Go back to your Turks," said the king to him, smiling; "if they attack me, I know how to defend myself." The king's chaplains likewise fell upon their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose to certain death the unhappy remains of Poltava, and especially his own sacred person; assuring him, at the same time, that resistance in such a case was altogether unjustifiable, and that it was a direct violation of all the laws of hospitality to resolve to continue with strangers against their will, especially with those strangers who had so long and so generously supported him. The king, who had heard Fabricius with great patience, fell into a passion with his priests,

and told them that he had taken them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

The generals Hord and Dehldorf, who had always declared against hazarding a battle which could not fail to be attended with fatal consequences, showed the king their breasts, covered with wounds, which they had received in his service; and assuring him that they were ready to lay down their lives for his sake, begged that it might be, at least, upon a more necessary occasion. "I know," said Charles XII, "by your wounds and by my own, that we have fought valiantly together. You have hitherto done your duty; do it to-day likewise." Nothing now remained but to pay implicit obedience to the king's command. Every one was ashamed not to court death with his sovereign. Charles, being now prepared for the assault, enjoyed in secret the pleasing thoughts, that he should have the honor of sustaining with three hundred Swedes the united efforts of a whole army. He assigned to every man his post. His chancellor, Muller, and the secretary, Ehrenpreus, and his clerks, were to defend the chancery-house; Baron Fief, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, was stationed at another post. A third place was to be guarded by the grooms of the stable and the cooks, for with him every one was a soldier. He rode from the intrenchments to his house, promising rewards to every one, creating officers, and assuring them that he would exalt the very meanest of his servants, who should fight with courage and resolution, to the dignity of captains.

It was not long before they beheld the combined army of the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack this little camp with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The banners waved in the air; the clarions sounded; the cries of "*Allah! Allah!*" were heard on all sides. Baron Grothusen, observing that the Turks did not mix in their cries any injurious reflections on the king, but only called him *Demirbash*, i. e., Ironhead, he instantly resolved to go out of the camp alone and unarmed; and having accordingly advanced to the lines of the Janizaries, most of whom had received money from him, "What

then, my friends," said he to them, in their own language, "have you come to massacre three hundred defenceless Swedes? You, brave Janizaries, who pardoned a hundred thousand Russians upon their crying amman (pardon),—have you forgot the many favors you have received from us? and would you assassinate that great King of Sweden for whom you have so great a regard, and from whom you have received so many presents? All he asks, my friends, is but the space of three days; and the sultan's orders are not so strict as you are made to believe."

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself could little have expected. The Janizaries swore by their beards that they would not attack the king, but would grant him the three days he demanded. In vain was the signal given for the assault. The Janizaries were so far from obeying, that they threatened to fall upon their leaders, unless they would consent to grant three days to the King of Sweden. They came to the pasha of Bender's tent, crying out that the sultan's orders were fictitious. To this unexpected sedition the pasha had nothing to oppose but patience.

He affected to be pleased with the generous resolution of the Janizaries, and ordered them to return to Bender. The Khan of Tartary, a man of headstrong and impetuous passions, would have given the assault immediately with his own troops, but the pasha, unwilling that the Tartars should have all the honor of taking the king, while he himself perhaps might be punished for the disobedience of the Janizaries, persuaded the khan to wait till the next day.

On his return to Bender, the pasha assembled all the officers of the Janizaries, and the oldest soldiers, to whom he both read and showed the sultan's positive orders, and the mufti's fetfa. Sixty of the oldest of them, with venerable gray beards, who had received a thousand presents from the king's hands, proposed to go to him in person, to entreat him to put himself into their hands, and to permit them to serve him as guards.

The pasha agreed to the proposal, as indeed there was no expedient he would not willingly have tried, rather than be reduced to the necessity of killing the king. Accordingly these

sixty veterans repaired next morning to Varnitza, having nothing in their hands but long white rods, the only arms which the Janizaries wear, except when they are going to fight; for the Turks consider the Christian custom of carrying swords in time of peace, and of entering armed into churches and the houses of their friends, as a barbarous practice.

They addressed themselves to Baron Grothusen and Chancellor Muller. They told them that they had come with a view to serve as faithful guards to the king; and that if he pleased they would conduct him to Adrianople, where he might have a personal interview with the Grand Seignior. While they were making this proposal, the king read the letters which were brought from Constantinople, and which Fabricius, who could no longer attend him in person, had sent him privately by a Janizary. These letters were from Count Poniatowski, who could neither serve him at Bender nor Adrianople, having been detained at Constantinople by order of the Porte, ever since the time of his making the imprudent demand of a thousand purses. He told the king that the sultan's orders to seize or massacre his royal person in case of resistance, were but too true; that indeed the sultan was imposed upon by his ministers; but the more he was imposed upon, he would, for that very reason, be the more faithfully obeyed; that he must submit to the times, and yield to necessity; that he took the liberty to advise him to try every expedient with the ministers by way of negotiations, not to be inflexible in a matter which required the gentlest management, and to expect from time and good policy a cure of that evil, which, by rash and violent measures, would be only rendered incurable.

But neither the proposals of the old Janizaries, nor Poniatowski's letters, could convince the king that it was consistent with his honor to yield. He rather chose to perish by the hands of the Turks, than in any respect to be made a prisoner. He dismissed the Janizaries without condescending to see them, and sent them word, that, if they did not immediately depart, he would shave their beards for them; an affront, which, in

the Eastern countries, is considered as the most intolerable of all others.

The old men, filled with the highest indignation, returned home, crying out as they went: "Ah! this Iron-head! since he will perish, let him perish." They gave the pasha an account of their commission, and informed their comrades at Bender of the strange reception they had met with; upon which they all swore to obey the pasha's orders without delay, and were as impatient to go to the assault as they had been averse to it the day before.

The word of command was immediately given. The Turks marched up to the fortifications: the Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play. The Janizaries on the one side, and the Tartars on the other, instantly forced the little camp. Hardly had twenty Swedes time to draw their swords, when the whole three hundred were surrounded and taken prisoners without resistance. The king was then on horseback, between his house and his camp, with the generals Hord, Dehldorf, and Sparr: seeing that all his soldiers had suffered themselves to be taken prisoners before his eyes, he said, with great composure, to these three officers: "Come, let us go and defend the house; we will fight," added he, with a smile, "*pro aris et focis.*"

Accordingly, accompanied by these three generals, he forthwith galloped up to the house, in which he had placed about forty domestics as sentinels, and which he had fortified in the best manner he could.

The generals, accustomed as they were, to the dauntless intrepidity of their master, could not help being surprised to see him resolve in cold blood, and even with an air of pleasantry, to defend himself against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army; nevertheless they followed him, with some guards and domestics, making in all about twenty persons.

When they had come to the door, they found it beset by the Janizaries. Besides, two hundred Turks and Tartars had already entered by a window, and made themselves masters of all the apartments, except a large hall where the king's domes-

tics had retired. Happily, this hall was near the door at which the king designed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons. He threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The Janizaries fell upon him on all sides. They were animated with the promise which the pasha had made, of eight ducats of gold to every man who should only touch his clothes, in case they could take him. He wounded and killed all those who came near him. A Janizary whom he wounded clapped a blunderbuss to his face, and had he not been jostled by the arm of a Turk, owing to the crowd that moved backwards and forwards like waves, the king had certainly been killed. The ball grazed his nose, and carried off part of his ear, and then broke the arm of General Hord, whose constant fate it was to be wounded by his master's side.

The king plunged his sword into the Janizary's breast. At the same time, his domestics, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door to him. The king, with his little troop, sprung in like an arrow. They instantly shut the door, and barricaded it with whatever they could find. Thus was Charles XII shut up in this hall with all his attendants, consisting of about sixty men, officers, guards, secretaries, *valets de chambre*, and domestics of every kind.

The Janizaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house, and filled the apartments. "Come," said the king, "let us go and drive out these barbarians;" and putting himself at the head of his men, he, with his own hands, opened the door that led to his bed-chamber, rushed into the room, and fired upon the plunderers.

The Turks, loaded with spoil, and terrified at the sudden appearance of the king, whom they had ever been accustomed to respect, threw down their arms, leaped out of the window, or flew to the cellars. The king, taking advantage of their confusion, and his own men being animated by the success of this attempt, they pursued the Turks from chamber to chamber, killed or wounded those who had not made their escape, and in a quarter of an hour cleared the house of the enemy.

In the heat of the fight the king perceived two Janizaries, who lay concealed under his bed; one of them he stabbed with his sword; the other asked pardon, by crying, *amman.* "I give you your life," said the king to him, "on this condition: that you go and give the pasha a faithful account of what you have seen." The Turk readily promised to do as he was bid, and was allowed to leap out at the window like the rest.

The Swedes, having at last made themselves masters of the house, again shut and barricaded the windows. They were in no want of arms. A ground-room full of muskets and powder had escaped the tumultuous search of the Janizaries. These they employed to good purpose. They fired through the windows almost close upon the Turks, of whom, in less than half a quarter of an hour, they killed two hundred. The cannon still played upon the house; but the stones being very soft, there were only some holes made in the walls, and nothing was demolished.

The Khan of Tartary and the pasha, who were desirous of taking the king alive, being ashamed to lose so many men, and to employ a whole army against sixty persons, thought it most advisable to set fire to the house in order to oblige the king to surrender. They ordered some arrows, to which lighted matches were attached, to be shot upon the roof and against the doors and windows. In a moment the house was in flames. The roof, all on fire, was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king, with great calmness, gave orders to extinguish the fire. Finding a small barrel full of liquor, he took it up, and being assisted by two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent. At last he recollected that the barrel was full of brandy; but the hurry, inseparable from such a scene of confusion, hindered him from thinking of it in time. The fire now raged with double fury. The king's apartment was reduced to ashes. The great hall where the Swedes were was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with sheets of flame that darted in at the doors of the neighboring apartments. One half of the roof sunk within the house; the other fell on the outside, cracking amid the flames.

In this extremity, a sentinel, called Walberg, ventured to cry that there was a necessity for surrendering. "What a strange man is this," said the king, "to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt than to be taken prisoner!" Another sentinel, named Rosen, had the presence of mind to observe, that the chancery-house, which was not above fifty paces distant, had a stone roof, and was proof against fire; that they ought to sally forth, take possession of that house, and then defend themselves to the last extremity. "There is a true Swede for you!" cried the king; and embracing the sentinel, he made him a colonel upon the spot. "Come on, my friends," said he; "take as much powder and ball with you as you can, and let us take possession of the chancery, sword in hand."

The Turks, who all the while surrounded the house, were struck with fear and admiration to see the Swedes continue in it, notwithstanding it was all in flames; but their astonishment was greatly increased when they saw the doors opened, and the king and his followers rushing out upon them like so many madmen. Charles and his principal officers were armed with sword and pistol. Every man fired two pistols at once, the moment the doors were opened; and in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their pistols, and drawing their swords, they made the Turks recoil above fifty paces. But in a moment after, this little troop was surrounded. The king, who was booted, as usual, entangled himself with his spurs, and fell. One-and-twenty Janizaries at once sprang upon him. He threw up his sword into the air, to save himself the mortification of surrendering it. The Turks bore him to the pasha's quarters, some taking hold of his arms, and others of his legs, in the same manner as sick persons are wont to be carried, in order to prevent their being hurt.

No sooner did the king see himself in their hands, than the violence of his temper, and the fury which such a long and desperate fight must have naturally inspired, gave place at once to a mild and gentle behavior; not one word of impatience dropped from his lips; not one angry look was to be seen in his face. He eyed the Janizaries with a smiling coun-

tenance, and they carried him off, crying *Allah*, with a mixture of respect and indignation. His officers were taken at the same time, and stripped by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the 12th of February, 1713, that this strange event happened,—an event that was followed by very remarkable consequences.[1]

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[1] M. Norberg, who was not present at this adventure, has, in this particular part of his history, only copied the account of Voltaire; but he has mangled it. He has suppressed some interesting circumstances, and has not been able to justify the temerity of Charles XII. All that he has been able to advance against Voltaire with regard to the affair of Bender, is reducible to the adventure of the Sieur Frederick, *valet de chambre* to the King of Sweden, who, according to some, was burnt in the king's house, and, according to others, was cut in two by the Tartars. La Motraye alleges likewise, that the King of Sweden did not use these words, "We will fight *pro aris et focis*." But Fabricius, who was present, affirms that the king did pronounce these words; that La Motraye was not near enough to hear them; and that, if he had, he was not capable of comprehending their meaning, as he did not understand a word of Latin.

BOOK VII.

The Turks convey Charles to Demirtash. King Stanislaus is taken at the same time. Bold undertaking of M. de Villelongue. Revolutions in the seraglio. Battle in Pomerania. Altona burnt by the Swedes. Charles at last sets out on his return to his own dominions. His strange manner of travelling. His arrival at Stralsund. His misfortunes. Successes of Peter the Great. His triumphant entry into Petersburg.

The Pasha of Bender, with great gravity, waited for Charles in his tent, attended by one Marco, an interpreter. He received his majesty in a most respectful manner, and entreated him to repose himself on a sofa; but the king, who did not so much as take notice of the Turk's civilities, continued standing.

"Blessed be the Almighty," said the pasha, "that your majesty is alive. I am extremely sorry that your majesty obliged me to execute the orders of his highness." The king, who was only vexed that his three hundred soldiers should have suffered themselves to be taken in their intrenchments, said to the pasha: "Ah! had they defended themselves as they ought, you would not have been able to force our camp in ten days." "Alas!" said the Turk, "that so much courage should be so ill employed." He ordered the king to be conducted back to Bender on a horse richly caparisoned. All the Swedes were either killed or taken prisoners. All his equipage, his goods, his papers, and most necessary utensils, were either plundered or burnt. One might have seen in the public roads the Swedish officers, almost naked, and chained together in pairs, following the Tartars or Janizaries on foot. The chancellor and the general officers did not meet with a milder fate; they were the slaves of the soldiers to whose share they had fallen.

Ismael Pasha having conducted Charles to his seraglio at

Bender, gave him his own apartment, and ordered him to be served like a king; but not without taking the precaution to plant a guard of Janizaries at the chamber door. A bed was prepared for him; but he threw himself down upon a sofa, booted as he was, and fell fast asleep. An officer, that stood near him in waiting, covered his head with a cap; but the king, upon awaking from his first sleep, threw it off, and the Turk was surprised to see a sovereign prince sleeping in his boots and bare-headed. Next morning, Ismael introduced Fabricius into the king's chamber. Fabricius found his majesty with his clothes torn; his boots, his hands, and his whole body covered with dust and blood, and his eyebrows burnt, but still maintaining, in this terrible condition, a placid and cheerful look. He fell upon his knees before him, without being able to utter a word; but soon recovering from his surprise, by the free and easy manner in which the king addressed him, he resumed his wonted familiarity with him, and they began to talk of the battle of Bender with great humor and pleasantry. "It is reported," said Fabricius, "that your majesty killed twenty Janizaries with your own hand." "Well, well," replied the king, "a story, you know, never loses in the telling." During this conversation, the pasha presented to the king his favorite Gröthusen, and Colonel Ribbing, whom he had had the generosity to redeem at his own expense. Fabricius undertook to ransom the other prisoners.

Jeffreys, the English envoy, joined his endeavors with those of Fabricius, in order to procure the money necessary for this purpose. A Frenchman, who had come to Bender out of mere curiosity, and who has written a short account of these transactions, gave all that he had; and these strangers assisted by the interest, and even by the money of the pasha, redeemed not only the officers, but likewise their clothes, from the hands of the Turks and Tartars.

Next day the king was conducted, as a prisoner, in a chariot covered with scarlet, towards Adrianople. His treasurer Grothusen was with him. Chancellor Muller and some officers followed in another carriage. Several were on horseback;

and when they cast their eyes on the king's chariot, they could not refrain from tears. The pasha was at the head of the convoy: Fabricius told him that it was a shame the king should want a sword, and begged he would give him one. "God forbid!" said the pasha; "he would cut our beards for us, if he had a sword." However, he gave him one a few hours after.

While they were conducting this king, disarmed and a prisoner, who, but a few years before, had given law to so many States, and had seen himself the arbiter of the North, and the terror of Europe, there appeared in the same place another instance of the frailty of human greatness.

King Stanislaus had been seized in the Turkish dominions, and they were now carrying him a prisoner to Bender at the very time they were removing Charles from it.

Stanislaus, being no longer supported by the hand which had raised him to the throne, and finding himself destitute of money, and consequently of interest in Poland, had retired at first into Pomerania; and unable to preserve his own kingdom, he had done all that lay in his power to defend that of his benefactor: he had even gone to Sweden, in order to hasten the reinforcements that were so much wanted in Livonia and Pomerania. In a word, he had done every thing that could be expected from the friend of Charles XII. About this time, the first king of Prussia, a prince of great prudence, being justly apprehensive of danger from the too near neighborhood of the Muscovites, thought proper to enter into a league with Augustus and the republic of Poland, in order to send back the Russians to their own country, and he hoped to engage the King of Sweden himself in this project. From this plan, three great events were expected to result: the peace of the North, the return of Charles to his own kingdom, and the establishment of a strong barrier against the Russians, whose power had already become formidable to Europe. The preliminary article of this treaty, upon which the public tranquillity depended, was the abdication of Stanislaus, who not only accepted the proposal, but even undertook to use his endeavors in bringing about a peace which deprived him of his crown.

To this step he was prompted by necessity, the public good, the glory of the sacrifice, and the interest of Charles XII. He wrote to Bender. He explained to the King of Sweden the desperate situation of his affairs, and the only effectual remedy that could be applied. He conjured him not to oppose an abdication which was rendered necessary by the strange conjunctures of the times, and honorable by the noble motive from which it proceeded. He entreated him not to sacrifice the interests of Sweden to those of an unhappy friend, who cheerfully preferred the public good to his own private happiness. Charles XII received these letters at Varnitza. He said to the courier in a passion, in presence of several witnesses: "If my friend will not be a king, I can easily find another that will."

Stanislaus was obstinately bent on making the sacrifice which Charles opposed. These times seem to have been destined to produce strange sentiments, and still stranger actions. Stanislaus resolved to go himself, and endeavor to prevail upon Charles; and thus he ran a greater risk in abdicating the throne, than he had run in obtaining it. One evening about six o'clock, he stole from the Swedish army, which he commanded in Pomerania, and set out, in company with Baron Sparr and another colonel, the former of whom has since been an ambassador in France and England. He assumed the name of a French gentleman, called Haran, who was then a major in the Swedish army, and lately died commander of Dantzic. He passed close by the whole army of the enemy; was sometimes stopped, and as often released by virtue of a passport obtained in the name of Haran. At length, after many perils and dangers, he arrived on the frontiers of Turkey.

As soon as he had reached Moldavia, he sent back Baron Sparr to the army, and entered Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, thinking himself perfectly secure in a country where the King of Sweden had been treated with so much respect, and never entertaining the least suspicion of what had happened.

The Moldavians asked him who he was? He said he was

major of a regiment in the service of Charles XII. At the bare mention of that name he was seized, and carried before the Hospodar of Moldavia, who having already learned from the gazettes that Stanislaus had privately withdrawn from his army, began to suspect that this was probably the man. He had heard the king's figure described so exactly, that it was very easy to discover the resemblance,—an open an engaging countenance, and a very uncommon air of sweetness.

The hospodar examined him, put to him a great many captious questions, and at last asked him what commission he bore in the Swedish army. Their conversation was carried on in Latin. *Major sum*, said Stanislaus. *Imo maximus es*, replied the Moldavian; and immediately presenting him with a chair of state, he treated him like a king—but still like a king who was a prisoner, placing a strict guard about a Greek convent, in which he was obliged to remain, till such time as the sultan's orders should arrive. At length these orders came, importing that Stanislaus should be carried to Bender, from which Charles XII had been just removed.

The news of this event was brought to the pasha, at the time he was accompanying the King of Sweden's chariot. The pasha communicated the particulars to Fabricius, who coming up to Charles's chariot, told him he was not the only king that was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks; and that Stanislaus was but a few miles off, under a guard of soldiers. "Run to him, my dear Fabricius," said Charles, without being in the least disconcerted, "tell him never to make a peace with Augustus, and assure him that our affairs will soon take another turn."

Such was the inflexibility of Charles, that, abandoned as he was in Poland, attacked in his own dominions, a captive in a Turkish litter, and led a prisoner without knowing whither they were carrying him, he still reckoned on the favor of fortune, and hoped the Ottoman Porte would assist him with a hundred thousand men. Fabricius hastened to execute his commission, attended by a Janizary, having first obtained leave from the pasha. At a few miles distance he met the body of

soldiers that conducted Stanislaus. He addressed himself to a person that rode in the midst of them, clad in a French dress, and but indifferently mounted, and asked him in the German tongue where the King of Poland was. The person to whom he spoke happened to be Stanislaus himself, whose features he could not recollect under this disguise. "What!" said the king, "don't you know me?" Fabricius then informed him of the wretched condition in which the King of Sweden was; but added, that his resolutions, however unsuccessful, were as determined as ever.

As Stanislaus was drawing near to Bender, the pasha, who had returned thither after having accompanied Charles for some miles, sent the King of Poland an Arabian horse, with a magnificent harness.

He was received at Bender amid a discharge of the artillery; and, excepting his confinement, from which he was not as yet delivered, he had no great cause to complain of his treatment.[1] Meanwhile Charles was on his way to Adrianople. Nothing was talked of in that town but his late battle. The Turks at once condemned and admired him; but the divan was so provoked, that they threatened to confine him in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

Stanislaus, king of Poland, from whom I had the honor to receive the greater part of these particulars, assured me likewise, that a proposal was made in the divan for confining him in one of the islands of Greece; but the Grand Seignior being mollified, a few months after allowed him to depart.

Désaleurs, who could have taken his part, and could have prevented the Turks from offering such an affront to all Christian kings, was at Constantinople; as was likewise Poniatowski, whose fertile and enterprising genius the divan had always

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[1] The good chaplain, Norberg, alleges that we are here guilty of a manifest contradiction, in supposing that King Stanislaus was at once detained a prisoner and treated as a king at Bender. What! had not the poor man discernment enough to perceive that it is very possible for a person, at one and the same time, to be loaded with honor and deprived of his liberty?

dreaded. Most of the Swedes at Adrianople were in prison; and the sultan's throne seemed to be inaccessible to any complaints of the King of Sweden.

The Marquis de Fierville, who had resided with Charles at Bender as a private agent of France, was then at Adrianople. He undertook to do that prince a piece of service, at a time when he was abandoned or oppressed by all the world besides. In this design he was happily assisted by a French gentleman, of an ancient family in Champagne, called Villelongue, a man of great courage, but who, not having a fortune equal to his spirit, and charmed with the fame of the King of Sweden, had repaired to Turkey with a view of entering into the service of that prince.

With the assistance of this young man, M. de Fierville wrote a memorial in the King of Sweden's name, in which he made his majesty demand satisfaction of the sultan for the insult, which, in his person, had been offered to all crowned heads, and for the treachery, real or supposed, of the khan and the pasha of Bender.

In this memorial he accused the vizier and other ministers of having received bribes from the Russians, imposed upon the Grand Seignior, intercepted the king's letters to his highness, and of having, by their artifices, extorted from the sultan an order so contrary to the hospitality of Mussulmans, by which, in direct violation of the laws of nations, and in a manner so unworthy of a great emperor, they had attacked, with twenty thousand men, a king who had none but his domestics to defend him, and who relied upon the sacred word of the sultan.

When this memorial was drawn up, it was to be translated into the Turkish language, and written in a particular hand, and upon a certain kind of paper, which is always used in addresses to the sultan.

For this purpose they applied to several French interpreters in the town; but the affairs of the King of Sweden were in such a desperate situation, and the vizier was so much his declared enemy, that not a single interpreter would undertake the task. At last they found a stranger, whose hand was not

known at the Porte, who, having received a handsome gratuity and being fully assured of the most profound secrecy, translated the memorial into the Turkish tongue, and wrote it upon the right kind of paper. Baron Arvidson, a Swedish officer, counterfeited the king's subscription; Fierville, who had the royal signet, appended it to the writing; and the whole was sealed with the arms of Sweden. Villelongue undertook to deliver it into the hands of the Grand Seignior, as he went to the mosque, according to his usual custom. The like methods had been frequently employed for presenting memorials to the sultan against his ministers; but that very circumstance rendered the success of this enterprise the more precarious, and the danger of the attempt the more imminent.

The vizier, who plainly foresaw that the Swedes would demand justice of the sultan, and who, from the unhappy fate of his predecessors, had but too many warnings to provide for his own safety, had given peremptory orders to allow no one to approach the Grand Seignior's person, but to seize all such as should be about the mosque with petitions in their hands.

Villelongue was well apprised of this order, and, at the same time, knew that, by breaking it, he ran the risk of losing his head. He therefore laid aside his Frankish dress, and put on a Grecian habit; and concealing the letter in his bosom, repaired betimes to the neighborhood of the mosque to which the Grand Seignior resorted. He counterfeited the madman, and dancing between two files of Janizaries, through which the sultan was to pass, he purposely let some pieces of money drop from his pockets, as if by chance, in order to amuse the guards.

When the sultan was drawing near, the guards endeavored to remove Villelongue out of the way; but he fell on his knees and struggled with the Janizaries. At last his cap fell off, and he was discovered by his long hair to be a Frank. He received several blows, and was very roughly handled. The Grand Seignior, who was at no great distance, heard the scuffle, and asked the cause of it. Villelongue cried out with all his might, *Amman! Amman!* Mercy! pulling the letter at the same time out of his bosom. The sultan ordered the guards

to let him approach. Villelongue instantly ran up to him, embraced his stirrup, and presented the memorial, saying, *Suet kral dan*, "The King of Sweden gives it thee." The sultan put the letter in his bosom, and proceeded to the mosque. Meantime Villelongue was secured, and imprisoned in one of the exterior apartments of the seraglio.

The sultan having read the letter upon his leaving the mosque, resolved to examine the prisoner himself. This perhaps will appear somewhat incredible: nothing, however, is here advanced, but what is vouched by the letters of Villelongue; and surely, when so brave an officer affirms any thing upon his honor, he merits, at least, some credit. He assured me that the sultan laid aside his imperial garb and turban, and disguised himself like an officer of the Janizaries, a thing which he frequently does. He brought along with him an old man of the Island of Malta, as an interpreter. By favor of this disguise, Villelongue enjoyed an honor which no Christian ambassador ever obtained. He had a private conference with the Turkish emperor for a quarter of an hour. He did not fail to represent the wrongs which the King of Sweden had suffered, to accuse the ministers, and to demand satisfaction; and all this with so much the more freedom, as in talking to the sultan he was only supposed to be talking to his equal. He could easily discover, notwithstanding the darkness of the prison, that it was no other than the Grand Seignior himself: but this discovery only made him speak with the greater boldness. The pretended officer of the Janizaries said to Villelongue: "Christian, be assured, that the sultan, my master, has the soul of an emperor; and that your King of Sweden, if he has reason on his side, shall obtain justice." Villelongue was soon set at liberty; and in a few weeks after, a sudden change took place in the seraglio, owing, as the Swedes affirm, to this conference alone. The mufti was deposed; the Khan of Tartary was banished to Rhodes; and the seraskier pasha of Bender was confined in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

The Ottoman Porte is so subject to these revolutions, that it is hard to say whether the sultan really meant to gratify

the King of Sweden by these sacrifices. From the treatment which that prince received, it cannot surely be inferred that the Porte had any great inclination to oblige him.

The favorite, Ali Coumourgi, was suspected of having brought about all these changes, in order to serve his own particular views. The khan of Tartary and the seraskier of Bender were said to have been banished for giving the king the twelve hundred purses, in contradiction to the express orders of the Grand Seignior. Coumourgi raised to the throne of Tartary the brother of the deposed khan, a young man of his own age, who had little regard for his brother, and upon whom the favorite depended greatly in prosecuting the wars he had already planned. With respect to the grand-vizier Jussuf, he was not deposed till some weeks after; and the title of prime vizier was bestowed on Soliman Pasha.

Truth obliges me to declare, that Villelongue and several Swedes assured me that all these great revolutions at the Porte were entirely owing to the letter which was presented to the sultan in the king's name, whereas M. de Fierville is of a quite contrary opinion. I have sometimes found the like contradictions in such memorials as have been submitted to my perusal. In all these cases, it is the duty of a historian honestly to narrate the plain matter of fact, without endeavoring to dive into the motives; and to confine himself to the relation of what he does know, instead of indulging his fancy in vague conjectures about what he does not know.

Meanwhile Charles XII was conducted to the little castle of Demirtash, in the neighborhood of Adrianople. An innumerable multitude of people had crowded to this place to see the arrival of his majesty, who was carried from his chariot to the castle on a sofa; but Charles, in order to conceal himself from the view of the populace, put a cushion upon his head.

The Porte was strongly solicited to allow him to reside at Demotica, a little town six leagues from Adrianople, and near the famous river Hebrus, now called Merizza; but it was not till after several days that they granted his request. "Go," said Coumourgi to the grand-vizier Soliman, "and tell the

King of Sweden, that he may stay at Demotica all his life long, if he pleases; but I will answer for him, that, in less than a year, he will want to be gone of his own accord: take care, however, not to give him any money."

Thus was the king conveyed to the little town of Demotica, where the Porte allotted him a considerable quantity of provisions for himself and his retinue. But all the money they would grant him was five-and-twenty crowns a day, to buy pork and wine, two kinds of provisions which the Turks never furnish to others. The allowance of five hundred crowns a day, which he had enjoyed at Bender, was entirely withdrawn.

Hardly had he reached Demotica with his little court, when the grand-vizier Soliman was deposed, and his place filled by Ibrahim Molla, a man of high spirit, of great courage, and unpolished manners. It may not be amiss to give a short sketch of his history, that the reader may thus be better acquainted with the characters of all those viceroys of the Ottoman empire upon whom the fortune of Charles so long depended.

He had been a common sailor till the accession of the sultan Achmet III. This emperor frequently disguised himself in the habit of a private man, of a priest, or a dervis; and slipped in the evening into the coffee-houses and other public places of Constantinople, to hear what the people said of him, and what were their opinions concerning the affairs of State. One day he overheard this Molla complaining that the Turkish ships never took any prizes, and swearing that if he were captain of a ship, he would never enter the port of Constantinople without bringing some vessel of the infidels along with him. Next day the Grand Seignior gave him the command of a ship, and sent him on a cruise. The new captain returned in a few days, with a Maltese bark and a galley of Genoa. In two years' time he was appointed captain-general of the navy, and at last grand-vizier. As soon as he had attained his new post, he thought he could easily dispense with the interest of the favorite. In order to render himself the more necessary, he formed a scheme for commencing a war against the Russians; and

with this view pitched a tent not far from the place where the King of Sweden resided.

He invited his majesty to come and see him, with the new khan of Tartary, and the French ambassador. The king, whose pride rose with his misfortunes, considered it as a most intolerable affront for a subject to send him an invitation. He ordered his chancellor, Muller, to go in his place; and, lest the Turks should not pay him that respect which was due to his royal person, or oblige him to condescend to any thing beneath his dignity, Charles, who was ever in extremes, took to his bed, which he resolved not to leave during his abode at Demotica. This resolution he kept for ten months, under pretence of sickness; Chancellor Muller, Grothusen, and Colonel Duben, being the only persons that were admitted to his table. They had none of the conveniencies with which the Franks are usually provided; all these they had lost at Bender; consequently it could not be supposed that their meals were served with much pomp or elegance. They were obliged to serve themselves; and, during the whole time, Chancellor Muller was cook in ordinary.

While Charles XII was thus passing his time in bed, he received the disagreeable news of the desolation of all his provinces that lay without the limits of Sweden.

General Stenbock [Steenbock?], who had rendered himself illustrious by chasing the Danes out of Scania, and beating their best troops with a parcel of peasants, still maintained the glory of the Swedish arms. He defended Pomerania, Bremen, and the king's possessions in Germany, as long as he was able, but could not hinder the combined army of the Danes and Saxons from besieging Stade, a town of great strength and importance, situated on the banks of the Elbe, in the Duchy of Bremen. The town was bombarded and reduced to ashes, and the garrison obliged to surrender at discretion, before Stenbock could come to their assistance.

This general, who had about twelve thousand men, of whom the one half was cavalry, pursued the enemy, who were twice as numerous, and at last overtook them in the Duchy of Meck-

lenburg, at a place called Gadebusch, near a river of the same name. It was on the 20th of December, 1712, that he came in sight of the Danes and Saxons. He was separated from them by a morass. The enemy were so posted as to have this morass in front and a wood in their rear; they had the advantage of number and situation; and their camp was utterly inaccessible, except across the morass, which the Swedes could not pass without being exposed to the fire of the enemy's artillery.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Stenbock passed the morass at the head of his troops, advanced against the enemy in order of battle, and began one of the most desperate and bloody engagements which ever happened between these rival nations. After a sharp conflict for three hours, the Danes and Saxons were entirely routed, and obliged to quit the field of battle.

It was in this battle that a son of Augustus, by the Countess of Königsmark, known by the name of Count Saxe, served his apprenticeship in the art of war. This is the same Count Saxe who had afterwards the honor to be chosen Duke of Courland, and who wanted nothing but power to put himself in possession of the most incontestable right which any man can have to sovereignty,—I mean the unanimous consent of the people. In fine, this was the man who has since acquired a more solid glory by saving France at the battle of Fontenoy, conquering Flanders, and meriting the character of the greatest general of the age. He commanded a regiment at Gadebusch, and had a horse killed under him. I have heard him say that all the Swedes kept their ranks, and that, even after the victory was gained, and the first lines of these brave troops saw their enemies lying dead at their feet, there was not so much as a single Swede that durst stoop to strip them till prayers had been read on the field of battle, so inflexibly did they adhere to that strict discipline which their king had taught them.

After the victory, Stenbock, remembering that the Danes had laid Stade in ashes, resolved to retaliate on Altona, a town belonging to the King of Denmark. Altona stands below Hamburg, on the banks of the Elbe, which can convey ships

of considerable burden into its harbor. The King of Denmark had indulged this town with many privileges, hoping to make it, one day, a place of great trade; and indeed the industry of the inhabitants, encouraged by the prudent measures of the king, had already raised them to such opulence, that Altona began to be reckoned in the number of rich and commercial cities. Hamburg grew jealous of this rival in trade, and earnestly wished for its destruction. When Stenbock came in sight of Altona, he sent a trumpet to acquaint the inhabitants that they might retire with as many of their effects as they could carry off, for he meant to raze their town to the foundation.

The magistrates came and threw themselves at his feet, and offered him a hundred thousand crowns by way of ransom. Stenbock demanded two hundred thousand. The inhabitants begged that they might have time, at least, to send to their correspondents at Hamburg, assuring him that the money should be paid him the next day; but the Swedish general replied, that they must give it instantly, or he would immediately set Altona in flames.

His troops were already in the suburbs, with torches in their hands. The town had no defence but a poor wooden gate, and a ditch already filled up. The wretched inhabitants were therefore obliged to leave their houses at midnight, on the 9th of January, 1713. The rigor of the season, which was then excessive, was still further increased by a strong north wind, which served at once to spread the flames through the town with greater violence, and to render the miseries of the poor people, who were exposed in the open fields, the more intolerable. Men and women, weeping and wailing, and bending under their heavy loads, fled to the neighboring hills, which were covered with snow. The palsied old men were transported on the shoulders of the young. Some women, newly delivered, fled with their tender babes in their arms, and perished together on the naked rock, turning their languishing eyes towards their dear country, which was now wrapt in flames. The Swedes set fire to the town before the inhabi-

tants had entirely left it. The conflagration continued from midnight till ten in the morning. The houses, being mostly of wood, were entirely consumed, and next day there was not the least vestige of a town remaining.

The aged, the sick, and women of tender constitutions, who had lodged on the snow while their houses were in flames, at last made a shift to crawl to the gates of Hamburg, where they besought the inhabitants to receive them within the walls, and thereby to save their lives. But this favor was denied them, because some contagious distempers were known lately to have raged in Altona; and the Hamburgers had not so great a regard for the inhabitants as to run the risk of having their own town infected by admitting such dangerous guests. Thus the greater part of these unhappy people expired under the walls of Hamburg, calling on heaven to witness the barbarity of the Swedes, and the still greater inhumanity of the Hamburgers.

All Germany exclaimed against this outrage. The ministers and generals of Poland and Denmark wrote to Count Stenbock, reproaching him with an act of cruelty, committed without necessity, and incapable of any excuse, which could not fail to provoke heaven and earth against him.

Stenbock replied, that "he never would have pushed matters to such extremities, had it not been with a view to teach the enemies of the king, his master, not to make war for the future like barbarians, but to pay some regard to the laws of nations; that they had filled Pomerania with their cruelties, laid waste that beautiful province, and sold near a hundred thousand of its inhabitants to the Turks; and that the torches which had laid Altona in ashes were no more than just reprisals for the red-hot bullets which had destroyed Stade."

Such was the implacable resentment with which the Swedes and their enemies carried on the war. Had Charles appeared in Pomerania at this time, he might possibly have retrieved his ruined fortune. His armies, though removed at so great a distance from his person, were still animated by his spirit; but the absence of a prince is always prejudicial to his affairs, and

hinders his subjects from making the proper use of their victories. Stenbock lost by piecemeal what he had gained by those signal actions, which, at a happier juncture, would have been decisive.

Victorious as he was, he could not prevent the junction of the Russians, Danes, and Saxons. The combined army of these allies seized upon his quarters. He lost some troops in several little skirmishes. Two thousand of his men were drowned in passing the Eider, as they were going to their winter-quarters in Holstein; and all these losses, in a country surrounded on every side by powerful enemies, were utterly irreparable.

He endeavored to defend the Duchy of Holstein against the Danes; but, notwithstanding all his prudent measures and vigorous efforts, the country was lost, his whole army ruined, and himself taken prisoner.

Pomerania, all but Stralsund, the Isle of Rügen, and some neighboring places, being left defenceless, became a prey to the allies, and was sequestered in the hands of the King of Prussia. Bremen was filled with Danish garrisons. At the same time, the Russians overran Finland and beat the Swedes, who, being now dispersed and inferior in point of number, began to lose that superiority over their enemies which they had possessed at the commencement of the war.

To complete the misfortunes of Sweden, the king resolved to stay at Demotica, and still flattered himself with the delusive hopes of obtaining assistance from the Turks, in whom he ought no longer to have reposed any confidence.

Ibrahim Molla, that bold vizier, who had been so obstinately bent on a war with the Russians in opposition to the favorite, was strangled in one of the passages of the seraglio.

The place of vizier had become so dangerous, that no one would venture to accept of it, and in consequence it continued vacant for six months. At last the favorite, Ali Coumourgi, assumed the title of grand-vizier. This measure gave a fatal blow to all the hopes of the King of Sweden, who knew Coumourgi so much the better, that he had really been obliged to

him for some friendly offices, when the interest of the favorite and that of his majesty happened to coincide.

Charles had now been eleven months at Demotica, buried in sloth and oblivion. This extreme indolence succeeding so suddenly to the most violent exercises, had at last given him the disease which he had formerly feigned. The report of his death was spread over all Europe. The council of regency, which he had established at Stockholm when he left his capital, no longer received any dispatches from him. The senate came in a body to the Princess Ulrica Eleonora, the king's sister, and entreated her to take the regency into her own hands, during her brother's absence. She accepted the proposal; but finding that the senate intended to force her to make a peace with the czar and the King of Denmark, and well knowing that her brother would never approve of such a measure, she resigned the regency, and wrote a full and circumstantial account of the whole matter to the king in Turkey.

Charles received his sister's packet at Demotica. The arbitrary principles which he had sucked in with his mother's milk, made him forget that Sweden had formerly been a free State, and that, in ancient times, the management of public affairs was conducted by the king and senate, in conjunction. He considered that respectable body as no better than a parcel of menial servants, who wanted to usurp the command of the house in their master's absence. He wrote to them, that, if they pretended to assume the reins of government, he would send them one of his boots, from which he would oblige them to receive their orders.

To prevent, therefore, these attempts (as he thought them) upon his authority in Sweden, and to defend his kingdom now in the last extremity, deprived of all hopes of assistance from the Ottoman Porte, and relying on himself alone, he signified to the grand-vizier his desire of departing, and returning by the way of Germany.

Désaleurs, the French ambassador, who was charged with the affairs of Sweden, made the proposal. "Well," said the vizier to Count Désaleurs, "did not I tell you, that, in less

than a year, the King of Sweden would beg it as a favor to be allowed to depart? Tell him he may either go or stay, as he pleases; but let him come to a fixed resolution, and appoint the day of his departure, that he may not again bring us into such another scrape as that of Bender."

Count Désaleurs softened the harshness of this answer, when he reported it to the king. The day was accordingly fixed. But, before he would quit Turkey, Charles resolved to display the pomp of a great king, though involved in all the difficulties of a fugitive prince. He gave Grothusen the title of his ambassador extraordinary, and sent him with a retinue of eighty persons, all richly dressed, to take his leave in form at the Porte. The splendor of this embassy was only exceeded by the meanness of the shifts which the king was obliged to employ, in order to collect a sum of money sufficient to defray the expense of it.

M. Désaleurs lent him forty thousand crowns. Grothusen had agents at Constantinople, who borrowed in his name, at the rate of fifty per cent. interest, a thousand crowns of a Jew, two hundred pistoles of an English merchant, and a thousand livres of a Turk.

By these means they procured wherewithal to enable them to act the splendid farce of the Swedish embassy before the divan. Grothusen received, at the Porte, all the honors which are usually paid to ambassadors extraordinary on the day of their audience. The design of all this parade was only to obtain money from the grand-vizier; but that minister was inexorable.

Grothusen made a proposal for borrowing a million from the Porte. The vizier answered coldly, that his master knew how to give when he thought proper, but that it was beneath his dignity to lend; that the king should be supplied with plenty of every thing necessary for his journey, in a manner worthy of the person that sent him back; and that the Porte, perhaps, might even make him a present in gold bullion, though he would not have him depend upon it for certain.

At last, on the first day of October, 1714, the King of Swe-

den set out on his journey. A capigi pasha, with six chiaoux, came to attend him from the castle of Demirtash, where he had resided for some days past. The pasha presented him, in the name of the Grand Seignior, with a large tent of scarlet embroidered with gold, a sabre whose handle was set with jewels, and eight beautiful Arabian horses, with fine saddles, and stirrups of massive gold. It is not beneath the dignity of history to observe, that the Arabian groom, who took care of the horses, gave the king an account of their genealogy,—a custom which has long prevailed among these people, who seem to be more attentive to the nobility of horses than of men; which, after all, perhaps, is not so unreasonable, as these animals, if the breed is kept free from intermixture, are never known to degenerate.

The convoy consisted of sixty loaded wagons, and three hundred horse. The capigi pasha being informed that several Turks had lent money to the King of Sweden's attendants at an immoderate interest, told his majesty that usury was forbidden by the Mahometan law; he therefore entreated him to liquidate all these debts, and to order his resident at Constantinople to pay no more than the capital. "No," said the king, "if any of my servants have given bills for a hundred crowns, I will pay them, though they should not even have received ten."

He made a proposal to his creditors to follow him, assuring them, at the same time, that he would not only pay their debts, but likewise indemnify them for the expense of the journey. Several of them went to Sweden; and Grothusen was commissioned to see them paid.

In order to show the greater deference to their royal guest, the Turks made him travel by very short stages; but this slow and respectful motion was ill suited to the impatient spirit of the king. During the journey, he got up at three in the morning, according to his usual custom. As soon as he was dressed, he went himself and awakened the capigi and chiaoux, and began to march in the dark. The Turkish gravity was affronted with this new manner of travelling; but Charles took

pleasure in making them uneasy, and said that he should, at least, be a little revenged on them, for their behavior to him at Bender.

About the time that Charles reached the frontiers of Turkey, Stanislaus was leaving them, though by a different road, and going into Germany, with a view of retiring into the Duchy of Deux-Ponts, a province bordering on the palatinate of Alsace and the Rhine, and which has belonged to the kings of Sweden ever since Charles X, the successor of Christina, united it to his crown. Charles assigned Stanislaus the revenue of this duchy, which was then valued at about seventy thousand crowns. Such was the final result of so many projects, wars, and expectations. Stanislaus both could and would have concluded an advantageous treaty with Augustus, had not the inflexible obstinacy of Charles made him lose his lands and real estate in Poland, in order to preserve the empty title of king.

This prince continued to reside in the Duchy of Deux-Ponts [Zweibrücken] till the death of Charles XII, when that province returning to a prince of the Palatine family, he chose to retire to Wissembourg, a place belonging to the French in Alsace. M. Sum, Augustus's envoy, entered a complaint on this head to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France. The duke made him this remarkable answer: "Sir, let the king your master know that France has never refused an asylum to kings in distress."

When the King of Sweden arrived on the frontiers of Germany, he had the pleasure to hear that the emperor had given strict orders to receive him in every part of his dominions with a becoming magnificence. The towns and villages through which the quarter-masters had previously fixed his route, made great preparations for receiving him; every one burned with impatience to see this extraordinary man, whose victories and misfortunes, whose most trifling actions, and even his keeping his bed, had made so great a noise in Europe and Asia. But Charles had no inclination to bear the fatigue of all this pomp and pageantry, or to exhibit as a public spectacle the prisoner of Bender. On the contrary, he had resolved never to re-enter

Stockholm, until he should have repaired his losses by a change of fortune.

As soon as he arrived at Tergowitz, on the confines of Transylvania, he took leave of his Turkish convoy; and then assembling his attendants in a barn, he told them not to give themselves any concern about him, but to proceed with all possible expedition to Stralsund in Pomerania, on the coast of the Baltic, distant from Tergowitz about three hundred leagues.

He took nobody with him but During, and parted cheerfully with the rest of his attendants, who were filled with astonishment, sorrow, and apprehension. By way of disguise, he put on a black wig, concealing his own hair, which he always wore underneath it, a gold-laced hat, a gray coat, and blue cloak, and, assuming the name of a German officer, rode post with his fellow-traveller.

He shunned, as much as possible, the territories of his secret or declared enemies, taking the road through Hungary, Moravia, Austria, Bavaria, Würtemberg, the Palatinate, Westphalia, and Mecklenburg; by which means he almost made the complete tour of Germany, and lengthened his journey by one half. Having rode the whole first day without intermission, young During, who was not so much inured to these excessive fatigues, fainted away as he was dismounting. The king, who was determined not to halt a moment by the road, asked During, as soon as he had recovered, how much money he had? "About a thousand crowns in gold," replied During. "Then give me one half of it," said the king; "I see you are not able to follow me, I shall finish the journey by myself." During begged he would be so good as to tarry but for three hours, assuring him, that by that time he should be able to remount his horse and attend his majesty, and entreated him to reflect on the imminent dangers to which he would expose himself by travelling alone. The king was inexorable. He made him give him the five hundred crowns, and called for horses. During, startled at this resolution, bethought himself of an innocent stratagem. He took the postmaster aside, and pointing to the king, "This gentleman," said he, "is my cousin; we

are going together upon the same business; he sees that I am indisposed, and yet he will not wait for me but for three hours; pray, give him the worst horse in your stable, and let me have a chariot, or post-chaise."

He slipped two ducats into the postmaster's hand, who punctually obeyed his orders. The king had a lame and restive horse, upon which he set out alone at ten at night, amid darkness, snow, wind, and rain. His fellow-traveller, after having slept a few hours, began to follow him in a chariot, with good horses. He had not rode many miles, when, at daybreak, he overtook the king, who, not being able to make his beast move on, was travelling on foot to the next stage.

Charles was obliged to get into During's chaise, where he slept upon the straw. Thus they continued the journey without intermission, by day on horseback, and sleeping by night in a chaise.

Having travelled for sixteen days, during which they had more than once been in danger of being taken, they arrived at last, on the 21st of November, 1714, at the gates of Stralsund, about one in the morning.

The king called out to the sentinel, and told him that he was a courier dispatched from Turkey by the King of Sweden, and that he must immediately speak with General Dücker, the governor. The sentinel said that it was too late; that the governor had gone to bed; and that he must wait till break of day.

The king replied that he came upon business of importance, and that if they did not instantly go and awaken the governor, they should all be punished next morning. At last a serjeant went and called up the governor. Dücker imagined that it might possibly be one of the king's generals: the gates were opened, and the courier introduced into the governor's chamber.

Dücker, who was still half asleep, asked him, "What news of the King of Sweden?" The king, taking him by the arm, "What," said he to Dücker, "have my most faithful subjects forgotten me?" The governor recollected the king, though he

could not believe his own eyes; and jumping out of bed, embraced his master's knees with tears of joy. The news of this happy event were spread through the town in a moment. Everybody got up. The soldiers flocked about the governor's house. The streets were crowded with people, asking each other whether the king had really come. All the windows were illuminated, and the conduits ran with wine, amid the blaze of a thousand flambeaux and the repeated discharges of the artillery.

Meanwhile the king was put to bed, which was more than he had been for sixteen days before. His legs were so much swollen with the great fatigue he had undergone, that, instead of pulling, they were obliged to cut off his boots. As he had neither linen nor clothes, they immediately furnished him with such a wardrobe as the town could afford. After he had slept a few hours, he rose and went directly to review his troops, and visit his fortifications. And that very day he dispatched orders into all parts, for renewing the war against his enemies with greater vigor than ever. All these particulars, which are so consistent with the extraordinary character of Charles XII, were first communicated to me by Fabricius, and afterwards confirmed by Count Croissi, ambassador to the King of Sweden.

Europe was now in a condition very different from that in which it was when Charles left it, in 1709.

The war which had so long raged in the South, that is, in Germany, England, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, was now at an end. The general peace which succeeded was owing to some private intrigues in the court of England. The Earl of Oxford, an able minister, and Lord Bollingbroke, one of the greatest geniuses, and one of the most eloquent orators of the age, had got the better of the Duke of Marlborough, and prevailed upon the queen to make a peace with Louis XIV. France being no longer at war with England, soon obliged the other powers to come to an accommodation.

Philip V, the grandson of Louis XIV, began to reign in peace over the ruins of the Spanish monarchy. The Emperor of Germany, now become master of Naples and Flanders, was

firmly established in his vast dominions, and Louis XIV seemed to aim at nothing higher than to finish his long career of glory by a peaceable end.

Anne, queen of England, died on the 10th of August, 1714, hated by half the nation for having given peace to so many kingdoms. Her brother, James Stuart, an unhappy prince, excluded from the throne almost at his birth, not being in England at that time to claim the succession, which new laws would have conferred upon him if his party could have prevailed, George I, elector of Hanover, was unanimously acknowledged king of Great Britain. The throne devolved to that elector not by right of blood, though descended from a daughter of James, but by virtue of an act of parliament.

George, advanced in years when he was called to reign over a people whose language he did not understand, and to whom he was an utter stranger, he considered himself rather as elector of Hanover than king of England. All his ambition was to aggrandize his German dominions. He commonly went once a year to visit his hereditary subjects, by whom he was adored. In other respects, he took more pleasure in living like a private man than like a mighty sovereign. The pomp of royalty appeared to him an insupportable burden. He passed his time with a few old courtiers, with whom he lived in great familiarity. He was not the king that made the greatest figure in Europe; but he was one of the wisest princes of the age, and perhaps the only one that knew how to enjoy on a throne the pleasures of friendship and private life. Such were the principal monarchs, and such the situation of the south of Europe.

The changes that happened in the North were of another nature. The kings in that part of the world were engaged in war, and leagued together against the King of Sweden.

Augustus had been long restored to the throne of Poland by the assistance of the czar, and with the joint consent of the Emperor of Germany, of Anne of England, and of the States-General, who, though guarantees of the treaty of Altranstädt, when Charles XII was able to impose laws, thought themselves

absolved from that obligation when they had nothing more to fear from him.

But Augustus did not enjoy an undisturbed authority. No sooner was he restored to the throne, than the people's apprehensions of arbitrary power began to revive. The whole nation was in arms to oblige him to conform to the *pacta conventa*, a sacred contract between the king and people, who seemed to have recalled their sovereign for no other purpose than to declare war against him. In the beginning of these troubles the name of Stanislaus was not once mentioned; his party seemed to be annihilated; and the Poles retained no other remembrance of the King of Sweden than as of a torrent, which, in the violence of its course, had occasioned a temporary change in the face of nature.

Poltava, and the absence of Charles XII, had occasioned the fall not only of Stanislaus, but also of the Duke of Holstein, Charles's nephew, who had lately been despoiled of his dominions by the King of Denmark. The King of Sweden had had a sincere regard for the father, and of consequence could not fail to be deeply affected with the misfortunes of the son; the rather, as, glory being the end of all his actions, the fall of those princes whom he had either made or restored, gave him as much pain as the loss of his own provinces.

Every one was at liberty to enrich himself with the ruins of Charles's fortune. Frederick William, the new king of Prussia, who seemed to be as fond of war as his father had been of peace, was the first who put in for his share of the spoils. He seized Stettin and part of Pomerania, as an equivalent for four hundred thousand crowns which he had advanced to the czar and the King of Denmark.

George, elector of Hanover, now become king of England, had likewise sequestered into his hands the Duchy of Bremen and Verden, which the King of Denmark had assigned to him as a deposit for sixty thousand pistoles. In this manner were divided the spoils of Charles XII; and whoever held any of his dominions as pledges, became, from their selfish and interested views, as dangerous enemies as those who had taken them from him.

With regard to the czar, he was doubtless the most formidable of all his enemies. His former losses, his victories, his very faults, his unremitted perseverance in acquiring knowledge, and in communicating that knowledge to his subjects, and his incessant labors, had justly entitled him to the character of a great man. Riga was already taken; Livonia, Ingria, Carelia, half of Finland, and all the provinces that had been conquered by Charles's ancestors, were now subjected to the Russian yoke.

Peter Alexiovitch, who twenty years before had not a single vessel in the Baltic, now saw himself master of those seas, with a fleet of thirty ships of the line.

One of these ships had been built by his own hands. He was the best carpenter, the best admiral, and the best pilot in the North. There was not a difficult passage from the Gulf of Bothnia to the ocean which he had not sounded. And, having thus joined the labors of a common sailor to the curious experiments of a philosopher, and the grand designs of an emperor, he arrived, by degrees and a course of victories, to the rank of admiral, in the same manner as he had become a general in the land service.

While Prince Gallitzin, a general formed under his auspices, and one of those who seconded his enterprises with the greatest vigor, completed the reduction of Finland, took the town of Vasa, and beat the Swedes, the emperor put to sea, in order to attempt the conquest of Aland, an island in the Baltic, about twelve leagues from Stockholm.

He set out on this expedition in the beginning of July, 1714, while his rival, Charles XII, was keeping his bed at Demotica. He embarked at Cronstadt, a harbor which he had built a few years before, about four miles from Petersburg. The new harbor, the fleet, the officers, the sailors, were all the work of his own hands; and wherever he turned his eyes, he could behold nothing but what he himself had, in some measure, created.

On the 15th of July, the Russian fleet, consisting of thirty ships of the line, eighty galleys, and a hundred half-galleys, reached the coast of Aland. On board of these ships were

twenty thousand soldiers; Admiral Apraxin was commander-in-chief, and the Russian emperor served as rear-admiral. On the 16th the Swedish fleet, commanded by Vice-admiral Ehrenskiöld, came up with the enemy, and, though weaker than they by two thirds, maintained a fight for the space of three hours. The czar attacked the admiral's ship, and took her after a sharp engagement.

The same day he landed sixteen thousand men on the Isle of Aland, and having taken a number of Swedish soldiers that had not been able to get on board of Ehrenskiöld's fleet, he carried them off in his own ships. He returned to his harbor of Cronstadt with Ehrenskiöld's large ship, three others of a less size, one frigate, and six galleys, all which he had taken in the engagement.

From Cronstadt he set sail for Petersburg, followed by his own victorious fleet and the ships he had taken from the enemy. On his arrival at Petersburg he was saluted by a triple discharge of a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. He then made a triumphant entry, which flattered his vanity still more than that at Moscow, as he received these honors in his favorite city, a place where but ten years before there was not a single hut, and where now there were thirty-four thousand five hundred houses; in a word, as he saw himself at the head not only of a victorious navy, but what is more, of the first Russian fleet that had ever appeared in the Baltic, and amid the acclamations of a people, to whom, before his time, the very name of a fleet was not so much as known.

The entry into Petersburg was accompanied with much the same ceremonies as that into Moscow. The Swedish vice-admiral was the chief ornament of this new triumph. Peter Alexiovitch appeared in the procession as rear-admiral. A Russian nobleman, called Romanodowski, who commonly represented the czar on these solemn occasions, was seated on a throne, surrounded with senators. To this nobleman the rear-admiral presented an account of his victory; and in reward of his services was declared vice-admiral;—an odd ceremony, but extremely necessary, in a country, where military subordi-

nation was one of the novelties which the czar wanted to introduce.

The Emperor of Russia, now victorious over the Swedes by sea and land, and having assisted in expelling them from Poland, began to domineer there in his turn. He acted as mediator between Augustus and the republic,—a glory, perhaps, not inferior to that of creating a king. This honor, and indeed, all the good fortune of Charles, had fallen to the share of the czar, who, it must be owned, made a better use of these advantages; for all his successes were so managed as to contribute to the interest of his country. If he took a town, the best artisans in it carried their families and their industry to Petersburg. The manufactures, the arts and sciences of the provinces which he conquered from Sweden, were transported into Muscovy. Thus were his dominions enriched by his victories, a circumstance that makes him the most excusable of all conquerors.

Sweden, on the contrary, despoiled of almost all her foreign provinces, had neither commerce, money, nor credit. Her veteran troops which were formerly so formidable, had either fallen in battle, or perished with hunger. Upwards of a hundred thousand Swedes were slaves in the vast dominions of the czar, and near the same number had been sold to the Turks and Tartars. The human species seemed visibly to decline in the country; but the king's arrival at Stralsund inspired them with fresh hopes.

The respect and admiration which they had formerly entertained for his sacred person, were still so strongly fixed in the minds of his subjects, that the youth came from the country in crowds, and voluntarily offered to enlist, though there was not a sufficient number of hands left to cultivate the lands.

BOOK VIII.

Charles gives his sister in marriage to the Prince of Hesse. He is besieged in Stralsund, and escapes to Sweden. Schemes of Baron Görtz, his prime minister. Plan of a reconciliation with the czar, and of a descent upon England. Charles besieges Frederickshald, in Norway. He is killed. His character. Görtz is beheaded.

In the midst of these preparations, the king gave his only surviving sister, Ulrica-Eleonora, in marriage to Frederick, prince of Hesse-Cassel. The queen-dowager, grandmother of Charles XII and the princess, and then in the eightieth year of her age, did the honors of the table at this solemnity, which was celebrated on the 4th of April, 1715, in the palace of Stockholm, where she died soon after.

The marriage was not honored with the presence of the king, who was then employed in finishing the fortifications of Stralsund, a place of great importance, and threatened with a siege by the kings of Prussia and Denmark. Nevertheless, he made his brother-in-law generalissimo of all his forces in Sweden. This prince had served the States-General in their wars with the French, and was esteemed a good general,—a qualification which contributed not a little to procure him the sister of Charles XII in marriage.

Charles's misfortunes now came as thick upon him as his victories had formerly done. In the month of June, 1715, the German troops of the King of England, with those of Denmark, invested the strong town of Wismar, while the combined army of the Danes and Saxons, amounting to thirty-six thousand men, marched towards Stralsund, to form the siege of that place. The kings of Prussia and Denmark sunk five Swedish ships a little off Stralsund. The czar was then in the Baltic.

with twenty large ships of war, and a hundred and fifty transports, on board of which were thirty thousand men. He threatened a descent upon Sweden; one time approaching the coast of Helsingborg, and at another appearing before Stockholm. All Sweden was in arms upon the coasts, and every moment expected an invasion. At the same time the czar's land forces drove the Swedes from post to post, until they had dispossessed them of all the places they held in Finland, towards the Gulf of Bothnia, but Peter pushed his conquests no farther.

At the mouth of the Oder, a river that divides Pomerania in two, and, after washing the walls of Stettin, falls into the Baltic, lies the little Isle of Usedom, a place of great importance on account of its situation, commanding the Oder both on the right and left; so that whoever is master of the island, is likewise master of the navigation of the river. The King of Prussia had dislodged the Swedes from this place, and taken possession of it as well as of Stettin, which he kept sequestered, and all, as he pretended, "for the sake of peace." The Swedes had retaken Usedom in May, 1715. They had two forts in the island; one of which was the fort of Swiene, upon a branch of the Oder, that bore the same name; the other, a place of greater consequence, was called Peenemunde, and situated upon another branch of that river. To defend these two forts, and indeed the whole island, there were only two hundred and fifty Pomeranians, under the command of an old Swedish officer, called Kuze-Slerp, a man whose name deserves to be immortalized.

On the 4th of August, the King of Prussia sent fifteen hundred foot and eight hundred dragoons to make a descent upon the island. They came and landed without opposition near the fort of Swiene, which, being the least important of the two, the Swedish commander abandoned to the enemy; and as he could not safely divide his men, he retired with his little company to the castle of Peenemunde, determined to hold out to the last extremity.

There was therefore a necessity of besieging it in form; for

which purpose a train of artillery was embarked at Stettin, and the Prussian troops were reinforced with a thousand foot and four hundred horse. On the eighteenth the trenches were opened in two places, and the fort was briskly battered with cannon and mortars. During the siege, a Swedish soldier, who was sent privately with a letter from Charles XII, found means to land on the island, and to slip into the fort. The letter he delivered to the commander. The purport was as follows: "Do not fire till the enemy come to the brink of the fosse. Defend the place to the last extremity. I commend you to your good fortune. CHARLES."

Slerp, having read the note, resolved to obey, and to lay down his life, as he was ordered, for the service of his master. On the twenty-second at daybreak the assault was given. The besieged having kept in their fire till they saw the enemy on the brink of the fosse, killed an immense number of them. But the ditch was full, the breach large, and the assailants too numerous. They entered the castle at two different places at once. The commander now thought of nothing but of selling his life dear, and obeying his master's orders. He abandoned the breaches through which the enemy entered, intrenched his little company, who had all the courage and fidelity to follow him, behind a bastion, and posted them in such a manner that they could not be surrounded. The enemy came up to him, and were greatly surprised that he did not ask for quarter. He fought for a complete hour; and, after having lost half of his men, was at last killed himself, together with his lieutenant and major. Upon this, the surviving few, amounting to a hundred soldiers and one officer, begged their lives, and were made prisoners of war. Charles's letter was found in the commander's pocket, and carried to the King of Prussia.

At the time that Charles lost Usedom, and the neighboring isles, which were quickly taken; while Wismar was ready to surrender, and Sweden, destitute of a fleet, was daily threatened with an invasion, he himself was in Stralsund, besieged by an army of thirty-six thousand men.

Stralsund, a town famous over all Europe for the siege which the King of Sweden sustained there, is the strongest place in Pomerania. It is situated between the Baltic and the Lake of Franken, near the straits of Gella. It is inaccessible by land, except by a narrow causeway, defended by a citadel, and by fortifications which were thought to be impregnable. There was in it a garrison of about nine thousand men, and, what was more than all, the King of Sweden himself. The kings of Prussia and Denmark undertook the siege of this place, with an army of six-and-thirty thousand men, composed of Prussians, Danes, and Saxons.

The honor of besieging Charles XII was so powerful a motive, that they soon surmounted every obstacle, and opened the trenches in the night between the 19th and 20th of October, 1715. The King of Sweden declared, at the beginning of the siege, that for his own part, he could not comprehend how a place well fortified, and provided with a sufficient garrison, could possibly be taken: not but that in the course of his past victories he had taken several places himself, but hardly ever by a regular siege. The terror of his arms carried all before it. Besides, he never judged of other people by himself, but always entertained too low an opinion of his enemies. The besiegers carried on their works with surprising vigor and resolution, and were greatly assisted by a very singular accident.

It is well known that the Baltic Sea neither ebbs nor flows. The fortifications which covered the town, and which were defended on the west by an impassable morass, and by the sea on the east, seemed to be secure from any assault. It had hitherto escaped the observation of every one, that when the west wind blows strong, the waves of the Baltic are driven back in such a manner as to leave but three feet depth of water under the fortifications, which had always been supposed to be washed by a branch of the sea so deep as to be utterly impassable. A soldier having fallen from the top of the fortifications into the sea, was surprised to find a bottom; and thinking that this discovery might make his fortune, he de-

serted, and went to the quarters of Count Wackerbarth, the Saxon general, to inform him that the sea was fordable, and that he might easily penetrate to the Swedish fortifications. It was not long before the King of Prussia availed himself of this piece of intelligence.

The next night, about twelve o'clock, the west wind still continuing to blow, Lieutenant-colonel Koppen entered the water, with eighteen hundred men. At the same time two thousand advanced upon the causeway that led to the fort: all the Prussian artillery fired, and the Danes and Prussians gave an alarm on the other side.

The Swedes thought they could easily repulse the two thousand men whom they saw advancing with so much apparent rashness upon the causeway; but all of a sudden, Koppen, with his eighteen hundred men, entered the fort on the side towards the sea. The Swedes, surrounded and surprised, could make no resistance; and the post was carried after a terrible slaughter. Some of the Swedes fled to the town; the besiegers pursued them thither, and entered pell-mell along with the fugitives. Two officers and four Saxon soldiers were already on the drawbridge, which the Swedes had just time to raise; so that the men were taken, and the town saved for that time.

There were found in the fort twenty-four pieces of cannon, which were immediately turned against Stralsund. The siege was pushed with such vigor and resolution as this success could not fail to inspire. The town was cannonaded and bombarded without intermission.

Opposite to Stralsund, in the Baltic Sea, lies the isle of Rügen, which serves as a bulwark to that place, and into which the garrison and citizens might have retired, could they have found boats to transport them thither. This island was of the last importance to Charles. He plainly perceived that should it fall into the hands of the enemy, he would be immediately besieged both by sea and land, and perhaps reduced to so great extremities, that he must either bury himself in the ruins of Stralsund, or else become a prisoner to those very

enemies whom he had so long despised, and upon whom he had imposed the most severe and rigorous terms. But notwithstanding these gloomy prospects, such was the wretched situation of his affairs, that he had not been able to place a sufficient garrison in Rügen, where, in fact, there were no more than two thousand men.

His enemies had been employed for three months past in making all the necessary preparations for a descent upon this island; and having at last finished a great number of boats, the Prince of Anhalt, favored by the goodness of the weather, landed twelve thousand men upon Rügen, on the 15th of November. The king, who seemed to be everywhere present, was then in the island, having lately joined his two thousand men, who were intrenched near a small harbor, three leagues from the place where the enemy had landed. He put himself at the head of this little troop, and observing the most profound silence, advanced at midnight towards the foe. The Prince of Anhalt had already intrenched his forces, a precaution which seemed altogether unnecessary. The inferior officers never dreamed of being attacked the very first night, as they imagined Charles to be at Stralsund; but the Prince of Anhalt, who well knew what incredible things Charles was capable of attempting, had caused a deep fosse to be sunk, fenced with *chevaux-de-frise*, and indeed took all his measures with as much circumspection, as if he had had a superior army to contend with.

At two in the morning Charles reached the enemy's camp, without making the least noise. His soldiers said to each other, "Come, let us pull up the *chevaux-de-frise*." These words being overheard by the sentinels, the alarm was instantly given in the camp, and the enemy put themselves under arms. The king, taking up the *chevaux-de-frise*, perceived a deep ditch before him. "Ah!" said he, "is it possible? This is more than I expected." However, this unexpected event did not disconcert him. He was alike ignorant of the number of the enemy, and they of his. The darkness of the night seemed to favor the boldness of the attempt. He formed his resolu-

tion in a moment, and jumped into the ditch, accompanied by the bravest of his men, and instantly followed by all the rest. The *chevaux-de-frise*, which were presently plucked up, the crumbling earth, the trunks and branches of such trees as they could find, and the carcasses of the soldiers that were killed by random shot, served for fascines. The king, the generals, and the bravest of the officers and soldiers, mounted upon the shoulders of others, as in an assault. The fight began in the enemy's camp. The irresistible impetuosity of the Swedes soon threw the Danes and Prussians into confusion; but the numbers were too unequally matched. After a keen dispute for a quarter of an hour, the Swedes were repulsed, and obliged to repass the fosse. The Prince of Anhalt pursued them into a plain, little thinking it was Charles XII that fled before him. The unhappy monarch rallied his troops in the open field, and the battle was renewed with equal fury on both sides. Grothusen, the king's favorite, and General Dehldorf, fell dead at his feet. In the heat of the fight Charles passed over the body of the latter, who was still breathing; and During, who had accompanied him in his journey from Turkey to Stralsund, was killed before his face.

In the midst of the fray, a Danish lieutenant, whose name I have not been able to learn, knew the king; and seizing his sword with one hand, and with the other dragging him by the hair, "Surrender yourself," said he, "or you are a dead man." The king drew a pistol from his belt, and with his left hand fired it at the officer, who died of the wound the next morning. The name of King Charles, which the Dane had pronounced, immediately drew a crowd of the enemy together. The king was surrounded, and received a musket-shot below his left breast. The wound, which he called a contusion, was two fingers deep. Charles was on foot, and in the most imminent danger of either being killed or taken prisoner. At that critical moment Count Poniatowski fought near his majesty's person. He had saved his life at Poltava, and had now the good fortune to save it once more in the battle of Rügen, by putting him on his horse.

The Swedes retired to a part of the island called Alteferre, where there was a fort, of which they were still masters. From thence the king passed over to Stralsund, obliged to abandon his brave troops, who had so courageously assisted him in this daring enterprise, and who, two days after, were all made prisoners of war.

Among the prisoners was that unhappy French regiment, composed of the shattered remains of the battle of Hochstädt, which had entered into the service of Augustus, and afterwards into that of the King of Sweden. Most of the soldiers were now incorporated in a new regiment, commanded by the Prince of Anhalt's son, who was their fourth master. The commander of this wandering regiment in the isle of Rügen was that same Count de Villelongue, who had so nobly exposed his life at Adrianople to serve King Charles XII. He was taken prisoner with his men, and but poorly rewarded in the sequel for all his services, labors, and sufferings.

After all these prodigies of valor, which tended only to weaken his forces, the king, shut up in Stralsund, which was every moment in danger of being stormed, behaved in much the same manner as he had done at Bender. Unappalled by so many surrounding dangers, he employed the day in making ditches and intrenchments behind the walls, and by night he sallied out upon the enemy. Meanwhile Stralsund was battered in breach; the bombs fell thick as hail upon the houses, and half the town was reduced to ashes. The citizens were so far from complaining, that, filled with the highest veneration for their royal master, whose vigilance, temperance, and courage they could not sufficiently admire, they had all become soldiers under him. They accompanied him in all his sallies, and served him in place of a second garrison.

One day, as the king was dictating some letters to his secretary that were to be sent to Sweden, a bomb fell on the house, pierced the roof, and burst near the royal apartment. One half of the floor was shattered to pieces; but the closet in which the king was, being partly surrounded by a thick wall, received no damage; and, what was remarkably fortunate

none of the splinters that flew about in the air came in at the closet-door, which happened to be open. The report of the bomb, and the crashing noise it occasioned in the house, which seemed ready to tumble about their ears, made the secretary drop his pen. "What is the reason," said the king, with great composure, "that you do not write?" The poor secretary could only utter, with a faltering voice: "The bomb, sir." "Well," replied the king, "and what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating? Go on."

There was at that time an ambassador of France shut up with Charles in Stralsund. This was one Colbert, Count de Croissi, a lieutenant-general in the French army, brother to the Marquis de Torci, the famous minister of state, and a relation of the celebrated Colbert, whose name ought never to be forgotten in France. To send a man on an embassy to Charles XII, or into trenches, was much the same thing. The king would talk with Croissi for hours together in places of the greatest danger, while the soldiers were falling on every side of them by the firing of cannon and the bursting of bombs,—Charles, to all appearance, insensible of the risk he ran, and the ambassador not choosing to give his majesty so much as a hint that there were more proper places to talk of business. This minister exerted his utmost efforts, before the siege commenced, to effect an accommodation between the kings of Sweden and Prussia; but the demands of the latter were too high, and the former would make no concessions: so the Count de Croissi derived no other advantage from his embassy to Charles XII than the pleasure of being intimately acquainted with that extraordinary man. He frequently lay by his majesty upon the same cloak, and, by sharing with him in all his dangers and fatigues, had acquired a right of talking to him with greater freedom. Charles encouraged this boldness in those he loved, and would sometimes say to the Count de Croissi: *Veni, maledicamus de rege*, "Come now, let us make a little free with the character of Charles XII." This account I had from the ambassador himself.

Croissi continued in the town till the 13th of November,

when, having obtained from the enemy a passport for himself and his baggage, he took his leave of the king, who still remained amid the ruins of Stralsund, with a garrison diminished by one half, but firmly resolved to stand an assault.

In fact, two days after, an assault was actually made upon the horn-work. Twice did the enemy take it, and twice were they repulsed. In this encounter the king fought amid his grenadiers; but at last superior numbers prevailed, and the enemy remained masters of the place. Charles continued in the town two days after this, expecting every moment a general assault. On the 21st he stayed till midnight upon a little ravelin that was entirely demolished by the bombs and cannon. Next day the principal officers conjured him to quit a place which he could no longer defend. But to retreat was now as dangerous as to stay. The Baltic was covered with Russian and Danish ships. There were no vessels in the harbor of Stralsund but one small bark with sails and oars. The great danger, which rendered this retreat so glorious, was the very thing that prompted Charles to attempt it. He embarked at midnight on the 20th of December, 1715, accompanied by ten persons only. They were obliged to break the ice with which the water of the harbor was covered,—a hard and laborious task, which they were forced to continue for several hours before the bark could sail freely. The enemy's admirals had strict orders not to allow Charles to escape from Stralsund, but to take him, dead or alive. Happily for him they were under the wind, and could not come near him. He ran a still greater risk in passing by a place called the *Babrette*, on the isle of Rügen, where the Danes had erected a battery of twelve cannon, from which they fired upon him. The mariners spread every sail and plied every oar, in order to get clear of the enemy; but two men were killed at the king's side by one cannon-ball, and the ship's masts were shattered by another. Through all these dangers, however, did the king escape unhurt, and at last came up with two of his own ships that were cruising in the Baltic. The next day Stralsund was surrendered, and the garrison made prisoners of war. Charles landed at Ystad, in Scania,

and forthwith repaired to Carlscrona, in a condition very different from that in which, about fifteen years before, he set sail from that harbor in a ship of a hundred and twenty guns to give laws to the North.

As he was so near his capital, it was expected that after such a long absence, he would pay it a visit; but he was determined not to enter it again until he had obtained some signal victory. Besides, he could not bear the thought of revisiting a people by whom he was beloved, and whom nevertheless he was obliged to oppress, in order to enable him to make head against his enemies. He wanted only to see his sister, with whom he appointed an interview on the banks of lake Wetter, in Ostrogothia. Thither he rode post, attended only by one servant, and after having spent a day with her returned to Carlscrona.

From this place, where he passed the winter, he issued orders for raising recruits through the whole kingdom. He thought that his subjects were born for no other purpose than to follow him to the field of battle, and he had actually accustomed them to entertain the same opinion. Some were enlisted who were not above fifteen years of age. In several villages there were none left but old men, women, and children; and in many places the women were obliged to plough the land alone.

It was still more difficult to procure a fleet. In order to supply that defect as well as possible, commissions were granted to the owners of privateers, who, upon obtaining certain privileges unreasonable in themselves, and destructive to the community, equipped a few ships; and these poor efforts were the last that the declining state of Sweden was now capable of making. To defray the expenses of all these preparations, there was a necessity for encroaching upon the property of the subject; and every kind of extortion was practised under the specious name of taxes and duties. Strict search was made in every house, and one half of the provisions there found was conveyed to the king's magazines. All the iron in the kingdom was bought up for his use. This the government paid

for in paper, and sold it out for ready money. A tax was laid on all such as had any mixture of silk in their clothes, or wore periwigs or gilded swords; and the duty of hearth-money was immoderately high. The people, oppressed with such a load of taxes, would have revolted under any other king; but the poorest peasant in Sweden knew that his master led a life still more hard and frugal than himself: so that every one submitted cheerfully to those hardships which the king was the first to suffer.

All sense of private misfortunes was swallowed up in the apprehension of public danger. The Swedes expected every moment to see their country invaded by the Russians, the Danes, the Prussians, the Saxons, and even by the English; and their fear of this hostile visit was so strong and prevalent, that those who had money or valuable effects took care to bury them in the earth.

An English fleet had already appeared in the Baltic, though its particular destination was not known; and the czar had given his word to the King of Denmark, that, in the spring of 1716, the Russians should join the Danes, in order to make a descent upon Sweden.

But how great was the astonishment of all Europe, ever attentive to the fortune of Charles XII, when, instead of defending his own country, which was threatened with an invasion by so many princes, they saw him, in the month of March, 1716, passing over into Norway, with twenty thousand men.

From the time of Hannibal to that of Charles XII, the world had never seen any general, who, unable to make head against his enemies at home, had boldly carried the war into the heart of their own dominions. The Prince of Hesse, his brother-in-law, attended him in this expedition.

There is no travelling from Sweden to Norway but through the most dangerous by-ways; and when these are passed, one meets with so many flashes of water formed by the sea among the rocks, that there is a necessity for making bridges every day. A handful of Danes might have stopped the progress of the whole Swedish army; but this sudden invasion had not

been foreseen. Europe was still more astonished to see the czar, amid all these mighty events, remaining inactive, and not making a descent upon Sweden, as had formerly been stipulated between him and his allies. This inactivity was owing to one of the greatest and most difficult schemes that ever was formed by the mind of man.

Henry of Görtz, a native of Franconia, and baron of the empire, having done several good offices to the King of Sweden, during that monarch's abode at Bender, had now become his favorite and first minister.

Never was man at once so bold and so artful, so full of expedients amid misfortunes, so unbounded in his designs, or so active in the prosecution of them; no project was too great for his daring genius to attempt, no means too difficult for his sagacity and penetration to discover; in pursuing his favorite schemes he was equally prodigal of presents and promises, of oaths, of truth and of falsehood.

From Sweden he went to France, England, and Holland, to examine those secret springs which he afterwards meant to put in motion. He was capable of throwing all Europe into confusion; and his inclination was equal to his power. What his master was at the head of an army, that was Görtz in the cabinet; by which means he had acquired a greater ascendency over Charles XII than any minister had possessed before him.

Charles, who, at twenty years of age, had prescribed orders to Count Piper, was now content to receive instructions from Baron Görtz, resigning himself to the direction of that minister with so much the less reserve, as his misfortunes obliged him to listen to the advice of others, and as Görtz never gave him any but such as was suitable to his undaunted courage. He observed, that, of all the sovereigns united against Sweden, George, elector of Hanover and king of England, was the prince against whom Charles was most highly incensed; because he was the only one to whom he had never done the least injury; and because George had engaged in the quarrel under the pretext of compromising matters, but in reality with

a view of preserving Bremen and Verden, to which he seemed to have no other right than that of having bought them for a trifle from the King of Denmark, to whom, after all, they did not belong.

Nor was it long before he discovered that the czar was secretly dissatisfied with his allies, who had all conspired to hinder him from acquiring any possessions in Germany, where that monarch, already too formidable, wanted only to obtain a footing. Wismar, the only town that still remained to the Swedes on the frontiers of Germany, was, on the 14th of February, 1716, surrendered to the Danes and Prussians, who would not so much as allow the Russian troops that were in Mecklenburg to be present at the siege. Such repeated marks of jealousy for two years together, had alienated the czar's mind from the common cause, and perhaps prevented the ruin of Sweden. There are many instances of several States in alliance being conquered by a single power, but hardly any of a great empire subdued by several allies. If it should happen to be humbled by their joint efforts, their intestine divisions soon allow it to retrieve its former grandeur.

Ever since the year 1714, the czar had had it in his power to make a descent upon Sweden; but whether it was that he could not perfectly agree with the kings of Poland, England, Denmark, and Prussia, allies justly jealous of his growing power, or that he did not as yet think his troops sufficiently disciplined to attack in their own territories a people whose very peasants had beaten the flower of the Danish forces, he still put off the execution of the enterprise.

But what had chiefly interrupted the progress of his arms, was the want of money. The czar, though one of the most powerful monarchs in the world, was far from being one of the richest, his revenues at that time not exceeding twenty-four millions of livres. He had discovered indeed some mines of gold, silver, copper, and iron; but the profits arising from these were still uncertain, and the expense of working them was intolerably great. He had likewise established an extensive commerce; but that in its infancy only filled him with the

agreeable hopes of what it might one day become; nor did the provinces which he had lately conquered increase his revenues in the same proportion as they augmented his power and glory. It required a long time to heal the wounds of Livonia, a country extremely fertile, but desolated by fire, sword, and distemper, and by a war of fifteen years' continuance, destitute of inhabitants, and as yet chargeable to the conqueror. His finances were further drained by the large fleets he maintained, and by the new enterprises which he was daily undertaking. He had even been reduced to the wretched expedient of raising the value of money, a remedy that can never cure the evils of state, and is, in a particular manner, prejudicial to a country whose exports fall short of the imports.

Such was the foundation upon which Görtz had built his scheme of a revolution. He ventured to advise the King of Sweden to purchase a peace from the Russian emperor at any price, intimating to him, at the same time, that the czar was highly incensed at the kings of Poland and England, and assuring him that he and Peter Alexiovitch, when joined together, would be able to strike terror into the rest of Europe.

There was no possibility of making a peace with the czar, without giving up a great many of those provinces which lie to the east and north of the Baltic Sea. But Görtz entreated the king to consider, that, by yielding up these provinces, which the czar already possessed, and which Charles at present was unable to recover, he might have the honor of restoring Stanislaus to the throne of Poland, of replacing the son of James II on that of England, and of re-establishing the Duke of Holstein in the peaceable possession of his dominions.

Charles, pleased with these mighty projects, upon which, however, he laid no great stress, gave a *carte blanche* to his minister. Görtz set out from Sweden, furnished with full powers to act without control, and to treat as his master's plenipotentiary with all those princes with whom he should think proper to negotiate. The first step was to sound the court of Moscow, which he did by means of a Scotchman,

named Erskine, first physician to the czar, and strongly attached to the Pretender's interest, as indeed most of the Scots were, except such as subsisted upon favors from the court of London.

This physician represented to Prince Mentchikof the greatness and importance of the scheme, with all the warmth of a man who was so much interested in its success. Prince Mentchikof relished the proposal, and the czar approved of it. Instead of making a descent upon Sweden, as had been stipulated between him and his allies, he sent his troops to winter in Mecklenburg, whither he soon after repaired himself. This he did under the specious pretext of terminating some disputes that had lately arisen between the duke and his nobility; but in reality with a view to prosecute his favorite scheme of obtaining a principality in Germany, and hoping he should be able to persuade the Duke of Mecklenburg to sell him his sovereignty.

The allies were highly provoked at these proceedings; and the more so, as they did not choose to have such a formidable neighbor as Peter Alexiovitch, who, could he once obtain any footing in Germany, might one day procure himself to be elected emperor, to the great oppression of all the princes of the empire. But the more they were provoked, the more was the grand scheme of Görtz forwarded. This minister, the better to conceal his secret intrigues, affected to negotiate with the confederate princes, who were likewise amused with vain hopes from the czar. Charles XII and his brother-in-law, the Prince of Hesse, were all this while in Norway, at the head of twenty thousand men. The country was defended by no more than eleven thousand Danes, divided into several detached parties, who were all put to the sword by the king and the Prince of Hesse.

Charles advanced towards Christiana, the capital of the kingdom; and fortune began once more to smile upon him in this part of the globe. But he never took sufficient care to provide for the subsistence of his troops. A Danish fleet and army were coming to the relief of Norway; and Charles, being

in want of provisions, was obliged to return to Sweden, there to wait the issue of his minister's mighty projects.

The execution of the scheme required at once inviolable secrecy, and vast preparations, two things almost incompatible. Görtz even ransacked the Asiatic seas for an assistance, which, however odious in appearance, would nevertheless have been extremely proper for making a descent upon Scotland, and for furnishing Sweden with ships, men, and money.

The pirates of all nations, and especially those of England, having entered into a mutual association, had long infested the seas of Europe and America. Driven at last from all their wonted haunts, and having no hopes of obtaining any quarter, they had lately retired to the coasts of Madagascar, a large island east of Africa. These men were all of them desperadoes, and most of them famous for actions which wanted nothing but justice to render them truly heroic. They were endeavoring to find a prince that would receive them under his protection; but the laws of nations shut all the harbors in the world against them.

No sooner were they informed that Charles XII had returned to Sweden, than they began to flatter themselves with the agreeable hopes, that this prince, passionately fond of war, obliged at present to be engaged in it, and in great want of ships as well as soldiers, would be glad to make an agreement with them upon reasonable terms. With this view they sent a deputy to Europe on board of a Dutch vessel, to make a proposal to Baron Görtz, that if they were sure of meeting with a favorable reception in the port of Gottenburg, they would instantly repair thither with sixty ships loaded with riches.

The baron prevailed upon the king to agree to the proposal; and next year Cronstrom and Mendal, two Swedish gentlemen, were sent to finish the treaty with the corsairs of Madagascar.

But a more honorable and a more powerful support was soon after found in Cardinal Alberoni, a man of an extraordinary genius, who governed Spain long enough for his own glory, but too short a time for the grandeur and happiness of

the kingdom. He readily embraced the proposal of placing the son of James II on the throne of England. Nevertheless, as he had but just entered into the ministry, and had the affairs of Spain to regulate before he could think of throwing other kingdoms into confusion, it was not likely that he would be able for a considerable time to put this grand machine in motion. But in less than two years he changed the face of affairs in Spain, restored that kingdom to her former degree of credit among the other powers of Europe, prevailed upon the Turks, as is commonly supposed, to attack the Emperor of Germany, and attempted, at one and the same time, to deprive the Duke of Orleans of the regency of France, and King George of the crown of England. So dangerous may one man become, when he is vested with absolute authority in a powerful State, and is endowed with courage and greatness of soul.

Görtz having thus scattered, in the courts of Muscovy and Spain, the first sparks of that flame which he intended to kindle, went privately to France, and from thence to Holland, where he had an interview with some of the Pretender's adherents.

He informed himself more particularly of the strength, the number, and disposition of the malcontents in England, of the money they could furnish, and the troops they could raise. The malcontents required only a reinforcement of ten thousand men, with whose assistance, they said, they should be fully able to effect a revolution.

Count Gyllenborg, the Swedish ambassador in England, being furnished with proper instructions by Baron Görtz, had several conferences at London, with the chiefs of the disaffected party. He encouraged them with the most flattering hopes of success, and readily promised them whatever they could wish to obtain; and they, on their part, were so forward as to furnish considerable sums of money, which Görtz received in Holland. He treated about the purchase of some ships, and bought six in Britain, with all kinds of arms.

He then sent several officers privately into France, and among others, the Chevalier Folard, who having made thirty

campaigns in the French armies, without any considerable addition to his fortune, had lately offered his service to the King of Sweden, not so much from any interested views, as from a desire of serving under a king of such a glorious reputation. Folard likewise hoped to recommend to that prince the improvements he had made in the art of war, which he had always studied as a philosopher; and he has since published his discoveries in his *Commentaries on Polybius.* Charles XII, who had made war himself in a manner entirely new, and was never guided by custom in any thing, was pleased with his notions, and resolved to employ him in his projected invasion of Scotland. The secret orders of Baron Görtz were faithfully executed in France by the Chevalier Folard. A great number of French, and a still greater number of Irish officers, engaged in this uncommon conspiracy, which was hatching at one and the same time in England, France, and Muscovy, and the branches of which were secretly extended from one end of Europe to the other.

These preparations, however great, were only a sample of what Görtz intended to do; though it was a matter of no small consequence to have thus set the scheme going. But the point of the greatest importance, and without which nothing could succeed, was to bring about a peace between the czar and Charles, to accomplish which, many difficulties were to be removed. Baron Ostermann, minister of state in Muscovy, refused at first to come into Görtz's measures. The former was as cautious and circumspect as the latter was bold and enterprising. The one, slow and regular in his politics, was for allowing every thing time to ripen; the other, of a daring genius and impatient spirit, had no sooner sown the seed than he was presently for reaping the harvest. Ostermann, fearing that the emperor, his master, dazzled with the splendor of this enterprise, would grant the Swedes a too advantageous peace. delayed the conclusion of it by a variety of obstacles and procrastinations.

Happily for Baron Görtz, the czar himself came to Holland in the beginning of the year 1717. His intention was to go

from thence into France. He was desirous of seeing that famous nation, which, for more than a hundred years past, has been censured, envied, and imitated by all its neighbors. He wanted to gratify his insatiable curiosity of seeing and learning every thing, and, at the same time, to exercise his politics.

Görtz had two interviews with him at the Hague; and in these he made greater progress than he could have done in six months with the plenipotentiaries. Every thing wore a favorable aspect. His mighty projects seemed to be covered under the veil of impenetrable secrecy, and he flattered himself that Europe would know them only by their being carried into execution. Meanwhile he talked of nothing but peace at the Hague; he openly declared that he would always consider the King of England as the pacifier of the North; and he even pressed (in appearance, at least) the holding of a congress at Brunswick, in which the jarring interests of Sweden and her enemies might be amicably adjusted.

These intrigues were first discovered by the Duke of Orleans, regent of France, who had spies in every part of Europe. Men of this character, who made a trade of selling the secrets of their friends, and got their livelihood by being informers, and frequently by inventing and propagating the grossest lies and calumnies, had so much increased in France under his government, that one half of the nation had become spies upon the other. The Duke of Orleans, who was connected with the King of England by personal ties, acquainted him with the secret plot that was hatching against him.

At the same time the Dutch, who began to take umbrage at the behavior of Görtz, communicated their suspicions to the English minister. Görtz and Gyllenborg were prosecuting their schemes with great vigor, when they were both arrested, the one at Deventer, in Gueldres, and the other at London.

As Gyllenborg, the Swedish ambassador, had violated the laws of nations, by conspiring against the prince to whom he was sent in a public character, the English made no scruple to violate the same law, by arresting his person. But all the world was surprised to see the States-General imprison Baron

Görtz, in order to gratify the King of England, an instance of complaisance hardly to be paralleled in history. They even appointed Count Welderen to examine him. This formality was only an aggravation of their former insult, which, being rendered entirely abortive, produced no other effect than to cover them with confusion. "Do you know me?" said Görtz to Count Welderen. "Yes, sir," replied the Dutchman. "Well, then," said Görtz, "if you know me, you must be aware that I will not speak one word more than I please." The examination was carried no farther. All the foreign ministers, and especially the Marquis de Monteléon, the Spanish ambassador in England, protested against the violence offered to the person of Görtz and Gyllenborg. The Dutch were inexcusable. They had not only violated a most sacred law, by seizing the prime minister of the King of Sweden, who had formed no plots against them; but they acted in direct opposition to the spirit of that inestimable liberty which has drawn so many foreigners into their country, and is the foundation of all their greatness.

With regard to the King of England, he had acted consistently with the strictest principles of justice, in imprisoning his enemy. He published, in his own vindication, the letters of Görtz and Gyllenborg, which were found among the papers of the latter. The King of Sweden was in Scania when he received these printed letters, together with the news of the two ministers being imprisoned. He asked, with a smile, if they had not likewise printed his letters; and gave immediate orders for arresting the English resident at Stockholm, with all his family and domestics. The Dutch resident was forbidden the court, and strictly watched in all his motions. Charles, meanwhile, neither avowed nor disclaimed the proceedings of Görtz. Too proud to deny a scheme which he had once approved, and too wise to acknowledge a plot which had thus been stifled in its birth, he maintained a disdainful silence towards England and Holland.

The czar took a very different course. As his name was not expressly mentioned, but only obscurely hinted at in the

papers of Görtz and Gyllenborg, he wrote a long letter to the King of England, complimenting him upon the discovery of the plot, and assuring him of the most inviolable friendship; and King George received his protestations without believing them, though he thought it most prudent in the present case to pretend that he did. A plot contrived by private men is annihilated the moment it is discovered; but a conspiracy, formed by kings, the more it is known the stronger it grows.

The czar arrived at Paris in the month of May, 1717. To view the beauties of art and nature, and to visit the academies, public libraries, the cabinets of the curious, and the royal palaces, were not the only ends of his journey. He made a proposal to the Duke of Orleans for concluding a treaty, which, had it taken place, would have completed the greatness of Muscovy. His design was to compromise matters with the King of Sweden, who would yield to him some large provinces, to deprive the Danes of the empire of the Baltic Sea, to weaken the English by a civil war, and to make all the trade of the North centre in Russia. He had even some thoughts of setting up Stanislaus afresh against Augustus, that, the fire being everywhere kindled, he might have it in his power either to quench it or blow it up, as should be most conducive to his interest. With this view he proposed to the Regent of France to act as mediator between Sweden and Muscovy, and to make a league, offensive and defensive, with these two crowns and that of Spain. This treaty, seemingly so natural and so advantageous to the several nations concerned, and which would have put the balance of power in Europe into their hands, was nevertheless rejected by the Duke of Orleans. Nay, at that very time, he entered into engagements of a quite opposite nature. He made a league with the Emperor of Germany, and with George, king of England. Reasons of state had so much altered the views and inclinations of all the princes of Europe, that the czar was ready to declare against his old ally, Augustus, and to espouse the cause of Charles, his mortal enemy; while France, in order to oblige the Germans and the English, was going to make war upon the grandson of Louis XIV, after

having so long supported him against these very enemies, at a prodigious expense of blood and treasure. All that the czar could obtain by these indirect measures was to prevail upon the regent to interpose his good offices to procure the enlargement of Görtz and Gyllenborg. He returned to his own dominions about the end of June, after having shown the French a sight they had never seen before,—an emperor travelling for instruction. But too many of that nation were only struck with his rude, unpolished manners, the result of his bad education; while the legislator, the great man, and the creator of a new nation, entirely escaped their notice.

What the czar sought for in the Duke of Orleans, he soon found in Cardinal Alberoni, who now governed the Spanish councils with unlimited sway. Alberoni desired nothing so much as the restoration of the Pretender, both as the minister of Spain, who had been so ill-treated by the English, and as a personal enemy to the Duke of Orleans, who was leagued with England against Spain; and, in fine, as a priest of that Church for the sake of which the Pretender's father had so foolishly lost his crown.

The Duke of Ormond, as much beloved in England as the Duke of Marlborough was admired, had left his country at the accession of King George, and retired to Madrid. This nobleman was now vested with full powers by the King of Spain and the Pretender; and, accompanied by one Irnegan, another native of England, a man of fine address and an enterprising spirit, he went to meet the czar on his way to Mittau, in Courland. He demanded the Princess Anne Petrovna, the czar's daughter, in marriage for the son of James II,[1] hoping that this alliance would the more strongly attach the czar to the interests of that unhappy prince. But this proposal, instead

[1] The truth of all these particulars is confirmed by Cardinal Alberoni himself, in a letter of thanks which he wrote to the author. M. Norberg, whose ignorance of the affairs of Europe can only be equalled by the poverty of his genius, alleges that the Duke of Ormond left England not upon the accession of George I, but immediately after the death of Queen Anne; as if George I had not been the immediate successor of that queen.

of forwarding, retarded, at least for some time, the progress of the negotiations. Baron Görtz, among his other projects, had long set apart this princess for the Duke of Holstein, to whom, in fact, she was soon after married. The moment he was informed of the Duke of Ormond's proposal, he became jealous of its success, and employed every art to render it abortive. He, as well as Count Gyllenborg, was set at liberty in the month of August, the King of Sweden not even deigning to offer the least apology to the King of England, nor to express the slightest disapprobation of his minister's conduct.

At the same time the English resident and all his family were released at Stockholm, where they had been treated with much more severity than Gyllenborg had been at London.

Görtz, being now at liberty, behaved like an implacable enemy, prompted not only by the powerful motives by which he had been formerly actuated, but also animated by a spirit of revenge, on account of his late imprisonment. He instantly posted away to the czar, and, by his artful insinuations, obtained a greater ascendency over that prince than ever. He assured him that, in less than three months, he would, in conjunction with a single plenipotentiary from Russia, remove every obstacle that retarded the conclusion of a peace with Sweden. Taking a map in his hand, which had been drawn by the czar himself, and making a line from Viborg all the way to the frozen sea, and running along the lake Ladoga, he undertook to persuade his master to give up all the country lying to the eastward of that line, as well as Carelia, Ingria, and Livonia. He then hinted at a proposal of marriage between his czarish majesty's daughter and the Duke of Holstein, flattering the czar with the agreeable hopes that the duke might possibly be prevailed upon to yield him up his dominions for an equivalent, by which acquisition he would become a member of the empire; and that either himself or some of his descendants might one day obtain the imperial crown. By these means he gratified the ambitious views of the Russian monarch, and deprived the Pretender of all hopes of marrying the czarinian princess, at the same time that he opened to him

a more tempting project in England, and thus accomplished all his own projects at once.

The czar named the isle of Aland for holding the conference between Ostermann, his minister of state, and Baron Görtz. He desired the Duke of Ormond to return to Spain, that he might not give too great cause of offence to the English, with whom he had no intention of coming to an open rupture till he should be ready to make the projected invasion. But Irnegan, the duke's confidant, was allowed to stay at Petersburg, where he lived with so much privacy and caution that he never went abroad in the daytime, nor ever conversed with any of the czar's ministers, except in the disguise of a peasant or Tartar.

Immediately after the Duke of Ormond's departure, the czar acquainted the King of England with the high compliment he had paid him in dismissing the greatest man in the Pretender's faction; and Baron Görtz returned to Sweden, flushed with hopes of success.

Görtz found his master at the head of thirty-five thousand regular troops, and all the coasts guarded by the militia. The king wanted nothing but money. But the public credit, as well at home as abroad, was entirely exhausted. France, which had furnished him with some supplies, during the last years of Louis XIV, refused to contribute any more under the regency of the Duke of Orleans, who pursued a course very different from that of Louis. Spain promised him some remittances; but was not yet in a condition to afford any thing considerable.

Görtz therefore carried a scheme into execution which he had tried before his journey to France and Holland. This was to give to copper the value of silver, so that a piece of the former metal, whose intrinsic value was only a halfpenny, should, when stamped with the king's mark, pass for forty pence; as the governors of besieged towns frequently pay the soldiers and citizens in leathern money, in expectation of being one day able to reimburse them in real coin. This fictitious kind of money, which owes its birth to necessity, and can only

be rendered current by its being punctually paid in real specie, is like bills of exchange, the imaginary value of which may easily exceed the solid funds that are in a nation.

These expedients are of great use in a free country. They have often saved a republic, but seldom, or never, fail to ruin a monarchy; for, as the people soon begin to grow suspicious, the minister is obliged to break his word: the ideal money multiplies apace: private men bury their money in the earth; and the whole machine of government falls into a confusion which is often productive of the most pernicious consequences, as was but too plainly exemplified in the kingdom of Sweden.

At first, Baron Görtz issued his new coin with equal discretion and reserve; but, by the rapidity of a motion which he could not restrain, he was soon hurried beyond the limits which he had originally prescribed to himself. All kinds of goods and provisions having risen to an immoderate price, he was obliged to increase the quantity of his copper coin. But the more it was increased, the less was its value; and Sweden, deluged as it were by this false money, set up a general cry against the baron. The people, who always regarded their sovereign with a kind of veneration, could not find it in their hearts to hate him, and therefore made the weight of their resentment fall on a minister, who, both as a foreigner and chief director of the finances, was doubly exposed to the public odium.

But what entirely completed his ruin, was a tax he attempted to impose on the clergy. The clergy, who are too apt to join their own cause to that of the Supreme Being, called him an atheist, because he demanded their money. Some of the new copper coin being stamped with the figures of the heathen gods, they thence took occasion to call those pieces *the gods of Baron Görtz.*

To this public odium under which he labored, was added the jealousy of the ministers; the more implacable in their resentment as their power was the less. The king's sister, and the prince her husband, dreaded him, as a man attached from his birth to the Duke of Holstein, and might one day be able

to place the crown of Sweden on his head. In a word, he had incurred the hatred of the whole nation, Charles alone excepted; but this general aversion served only to insure to him the friendship of the king, whose maxim it always was to be the more inflexible the more he was contradicted. Accordingly, he now relied upon the baron with an almost implicit confidence; gave him an absolute power in the interior government of the kingdom; and committed to his care whatever related to the negotiations with the czar, pressing him above all things to hasten the conference that was to be held in the island of Aland.

And, indeed, Görtz had no sooner regulated the finances (a work which had hitherto detained him at Stockholm), than he set out on his journey for the place appointed, in order to finish, with the czar's minister, the grand scheme he had projected.

The preliminary articles of that alliance, which was wholly to have changed the face of affairs in Europe, were found among Görtz's papers after his death, and were as follows:

The czar was to keep the whole of Livonia, and part of Ingria and Carelia, to himself, and to restore the rest to Sweden. He was to join his efforts with those of Charles XII in order to restore Stanislaus to the throne of Poland, and to enter that country with eighty thousand Russians, to dethrone the very king in whose defence he had waged a war of ten years' continuance. He was to furnish the King of Sweden with a number of ships sufficient to transport ten thousand Swedes to England, and thirty thousand to Germany. The united forces of Peter and Charles were to attack the King of England in his German dominions, especially in Bremen and Verden; and were likewise to be employed in re-establishing the Duke of Holstein, and compelling the King of Prussia to agree to a treaty, by which he would have been deprived of part of those territories which he had seized. From the time that this alliance was made, Charles assumed as lofty airs, as if his victorious troops, reinforced by those of the czar, had already carried all his schemes into execution. He required the Emperor of

Germany, in a peremptory manner, to fulfil the treaty of Altranstädt. But the court of Vienna would hardly deign to give an answer to the proposal of a prince from whom she had nothing to fear.

The King of Poland did not enjoy the same tranquillity, but saw the clouds gathering all around him. The Polish nobility had formed a confederacy against him; and, ever since his restoration, he had perpetually been engaged either in wars or treaties with his subjects. The czar, who had now become a dangerous mediator, had a hundred galleys near Dantzic, and forty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland. All the North was filled with jealousy and apprehension. Flemming, of all men in the world the most apt to distrust, and himself the most to be distrusted, was the first who suspected the designs of the czar and the King of Sweden in favor of Stanislaus. He therefore resolved to have this prince seized in the Duchy of Deux-Ponts, as James Sobieski had formerly been in Silesia. A Frenchman, one of those restless and enterprising spirits, who wander into foreign parts to try their fortunes, had lately brought a small number of his countrymen, bold and daring like himself, into the service of the King of Poland. He imparted a project to Flemming, by which he undertook, with the assistance of thirty French officers, to seize Stanislaus in his own palace, and carry him a prisoner to Dresden. The project was approved. Enterprises of that nature were not then uncommon. Some of those desperate fellows who are called *bravos* in Italy, had performed the like achievements in the Milanese, during the last war between France and Germany: and, even since that time, several French refugees in Holland had ventured to penetrate to Versailles, in order to carry off the dauphin, and actually had seized the person of the first equerry, almost under the windows of the castle, where Louis XIV resided.

Accordingly, the adventurer disposed his men and post-horses in the best manner he could contrive, in order to seize and carry off Stanislaus. But the enterprise was discovered the night before it was to have been carried into execution.

Several of the desperadoes saved themselves by flight, and the rest were taken prisoners. They had no right to expect to be treated as prisoners of war, but rather as common robbers. Stanislaus, instead of punishing them as their crime deserved, contented himself with reproaching them with their baseness, and even that he did with the greatest politeness and humanity. Nay, what is more, he gave them money to defray the expenses of their return to Poland, and, by that act of generosity, plainly showed that his rival Augustus had but too much reason to fear him.[1]

Meanwhile Charles set out on a second expedition to Norway, in the month of October, 1718. He had taken all his measures with so much prudence and precaution, that he hoped he should be able, in the space of six months, to make himself master of that kingdom. He rather chose to go and conquer rocks amid ice and snow, in the depth of winter, which kills the animals even in Sweden, where the cold is less severe, than to recover his beautiful provinces in Germany. These he expected he should soon be able to retake in consequence of his alliance with the czar; and, in any event, it was a much more tempting object of ambition to wrest a kingdom from his victorious foe.

At the mouth of the river Tistadaelf, near the Danish channel, and between the towns of Bahus and Anslo, stands Frederickshald, a place of great strength and importance, and considered as the key of the kingdom, To this town Charles laid siege, in the month of December. The soldiers, benumbed with cold, were hardly able to break the ground, which was so much hardened by the frost, that it was almost as difficult to pierce it, as if they had been opening trenches in a rock. But nothing could resist the resolution and perseverance of the

[1] Here M. Norberg accuses the author of treating crowned heads with too little respect; as if this faithful account contained in it any thing injurious, or as if we were obliged to relate aught but truth of departed kings. Does he imagine that history should resemble a sermon preached before a sovereign, in which the flattering orator loads his royal hearer with unmerited praises?

Swedes, while they saw their king at their head, and sharing in all their labors. Never, indeed, did Charles undergo greater fatigues. His constitution, strengthened by eighteen years of severe labor, was hardened to such a degree, that he slept in the open field in Norway in the midst of winter, covered only with a cloak, and without doing the least injury to his health. Several of the soldiers on duty dropped down dead with cold; and though the rest were almost frozen to death, yet as they saw their king sharing in all their hardships, they durst not utter a single word of complaint. Having heard, a little before this expedition, of a certain woman in Scania, called Johns Dotter, who had lived for several months, without any other nourishment than water; he, who had all his life studied to inure himself to the worst extremes that human nature can support, resolved to try how long he could fast without fainting. Accordingly he fasted five whole days, without either eating or drinking; and on the morning of the sixth, rode two leagues, and then alighted at the tent of the Prince of Hesse, his brother-in-law, where he eat heartily, without feeling the least disorder, either from his long fast of five days, or from the plentiful meal which now succeeded.[1]

With such a body of iron, inspired by a soul so bold and inflexible in every condition, he could not fail to be formidable to all his neighbors.

On the eleventh of December, being St. Andrew's day, he went at nine in the evening to view the trenches; and not finding the parallel so far advanced as he expected, he could not help expressing his surprise and displeasure. Mégret, a French engineer, who conducted the siege, assured him that the place would be taken in eight days. "Well! we shall see," said the king, and went on with the engineer to survey the works. He stopped at a place where a branch of the trenches formed an angle with the parallel. He knelt on the inner *talus*, and resting his elbow on the parapet, continued

[1] Norberg alleges, that it was to cure a pain in his breast that Charles submitted to this long abstinence. Confessor Norberg is surely a most wretched physician.

for some time to view the men who were carrying on the trenches by starlight.

Circumstances, in their own nature trivial, become important when they relate to the death of such a man as Charles XII. I must therefore take upon me to say, that the whole of the conversation, reported by so many writers to have passed between the king and Mégret the engineer, is absolutely false. The following account I can affirm, upon the best authority, to be the real truth of the matter.

The king stood with almost the half of his body exposed to a battery of cannon pointed directly against the angle where he was. He was attended by two Frenchmen only; one of whom was M. Siquier, his aid-de-camp, a man of courage and conduct, who had entered into his service in Turkey, and was particularly attached to the Prince of Hesse; the other was this engineer. The cannon fired upon them with grape-shot, to which the king, as he stood behind them, was most exposed. A little behind them was Count Schwerin, who commanded the trenches. While Schwerin was giving orders to Count Posse, a captain of the guards, and to one Kaulbar, his aid-de-camp, Siquier and Mégret saw the king fall upon the parapet, with a deep sigh. They ran to him; but he was already dead. A ball of half a pound had struck him on the right temple, and made a hole sufficient to receive three fingers at once. His head reclined upon the parapet; his left eye was beaten in, and the right one entirely beaten out of its socket. Though he expired the moment he received the wound, yet by a kind of instinctive motion, he had grasped the hilt of his sword in his hand, and still lay in that posture. At the sight of this shocking spectacle, Mégret, a man of a singular turn of mind, and of great indifference of temper, said, "Come, gentlemen, the play is ended, let us now go to supper." Siquier ran immediately and informed Count Schwerin of what had happened. They all agreed to conceal the news of his death from the soldiers, till such time as the Prince of Hesse should be acquainted with it. The body was wrapped up in a gray cloak. Siquier put his hat and wig on the king's head; and in this condition

Charles was carried, under the name of one Captain Carlberg, through the midst of his troops, who thus saw their dead king pass them, without ever dreaming that it was his majesty.

The prince gave instant orders that no one should stir out of the camp, and that all the passes to Sweden should be strictly guarded, that so he might have time to take the necessary measures for placing the crown on his wife's head, and to exclude the Duke of Holstein, who might lay claim to it.

Thus fell Charles XII, king of Sweden, at the age of thirty-six years and a half, after having experienced all the grandeur of prosperity, and all the hardships of adversity, without being either softened by the one, or the least disturbed by the other. Almost all his actions, even those of his private life, border on the marvellous. Perhaps he was the only man, most certainly he was the only king, that ever lived without weaknesses. He carried all the virtues of the hero to such an excess as rendered them no less dangerous than the opposite vices. His resolution, hardened into obstinacy, occasioned his misfortunes in the Ukraine, and detained him five years in Turkey. His liberality, degenerating into profusion, ruined Sweden. His courage, pushed to the length of temerity, was the cause of his death; and, during the last years of his reign, the means he employed to support his authority differed little from tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which would have been sufficient to immortalize another prince, proved pernicious to his country. He never was the aggressor; but, in taking vengeance on those who had injured him, his resentment got the better of his prudence. He was the first man who ever aspired to the title of conqueror, without the least desire of enlarging his dominions. His only end in subduing kingdoms was to have the pleasure of giving them away. His passion for glory, for war, and revenge, prevented him from being a good politician,—a quality, without which the world had never before seen any one a conqueror. Before a battle, and after a victory, he was modest and humble; and after a defeat, firm and undaunted. Severe to himself as well as to others, he too little regarded either his own life and labors, or those of his subjects; an extraordinary

rather than a great man, and more worthy to be admired than imitated. From the history of his life, however, succeeding kings may learn, that a quiet and happy government is infinitely preferable to so much glory.

Charles XII was of a tall stature and portly figure; he had a fine forehead, large blue eyes full of sweetness, and a well-formed nose. But the lower part of his face was disagreeable, and too often disfigured by a frequent laugh, which scarcely opened his lips; and as to hair and beard, he had hardly any at all. A profound silence reigned at his table. Notwithstanding the inflexible obstinacy of his temper, he always retained that bashfulness which goes by the name of false modesty. He was but little qualified to make a figure in conversation, because, having addicted himself entirely to war and action, he was utterly unacquainted with the pleasures of society. Till the time of his residence among the Turks, which furnished him with a good deal of leisure, he had read nothing but *Cæsar's Commentaries* and the *History of Alexander*. It is true he had written some remarks on the art of war, and particularly on his own campaigns from 1700 to 1709. This he owned to the Chevalier Folard, but said that the manuscript had been lost at the unfortunate battle of Poltava. Some people would make us believe that Charles was a good mathematician. That he was possessed of great depth and penetration of thought, cannot be denied; but the arguments they produce to prove his knowledge in mathematics are by no means conclusive. He wanted to alter the method of counting by tens, and to substitute in its place the number sixty-four, because that number contains both a square and a cube, and being divided by two is reducible to a unit. This, if it proves any thing, only shows that he always delighted in what was difficult and extraordinary.

With regard to his religion, though the sentiments of a prince ought to have no influence on other men, and though the opinion of a monarch so illiterate as Charles is of little consequence in these matters, yet in this, as well as in other particulars, we must gratify the curiosity of mankind, who are

anxious to know whatever relates to a prince of his character. I am informed by the gentleman who has furnished me with the greater part of the materials which compose this history, that Charles XII was a serious Lutheran till the year 1707. Happening then to be at Leipsic, he there met with the famous philosopher, Leibnitz, a man who thought and spoke with equal freedom, and had already instilled his notions into more princes than one. I cannot believe what is commonly reported that Charles XII conceived an indifference for Lutheranism from the conversation of this philosopher, who never had the honor to talk with him above a quarter of an hour; but I have been told by Fabricius, who lived with him in great familiarity for seven years successively, that having seen, during his abode among the Turks, such an infinite variety of religions, he became more lax in his principles. This fact is likewise confirmed by Motraye in his voyages. The same, too, is the opinion of Count Croissi, who has often told me, that of all his old principles, Charles retained none but that of absolute predestination, a doctrine that favored his courage and justified his temerity. The czar was of much the same way of thinking with regard to fate and religion, but talked of these subjects more frequently, as indeed he did of every thing else with his favorites, in a very familiar manner; for he had this advantage over Charles, that he was a good philosopher and an eloquent speaker.

Here I cannot help taking notice of a most uncharitable suspicion, too readily embraced by the weak and credulous, and too industriously propagated by the malicious and ill-natured, to wit: that the death of princes is always owing to poison or assassination. It was then the current report in Germany that Siquier was the man who killed the King of Sweden. That brave officer was long grieved at this injurious aspersion; and as he was one day talking to me on the subject, he said, "I might have killed the King of Sweden; but, had I been capable of forming such a barbarous resolution, so great was my veneration for that illustrious hero, that I could not have had the courage to carry it into execution."

I know, indeed, that Siquier himself gave occasion to this heavy charge, which, even to this day, many of the Swedes believe to be well founded. He told me, that, being seized with a violent fever at Stockholm, he cried out that he had killed the King of Sweden; and that, in the height of his phrensy, he even opened the window, aud publicly begged pardon for the regicide. When he was informed, in the course of his recovery, of what he had said in his illness, he was almost ready to die with grief. This anecdote I did not choose to publish during his life-time. I saw him a little before he expired, and think I can safely affirm, that, far from killing Charles XII, he would have suffered a thousand deaths to save the life of that hero. Had he actually committed such a horrid crime, it must have been to serve some prince, who no doubt would have liberally rewarded him for such a piece of treachery; but he died in France so extremely poor, that he even stood in need of my assistance. If these reasons are not thought sufficient to vindicate his memory, let it be considered, that the ball by which Charles fell could not have come from a pistol, and yet that Siquier had no other way to give the fatal blow than by a pistol concealed under his garments.

The king was no sooner dead than the siege of Frederickshald was raised, and a total change took place in the government. The Swedes, who considered the glory of their sovereign rather as a burden than an advantage, applied their whole attention towards concluding a peace with their enemies, and suppressing that absolute power which Baron Görtz had so much abused to their ruin. The States, by a free and voluntary choice, elected the sister of Charles XII for their queen, and obliged her, by a solemn act, to renounce all hereditary right to the crown, that so she might hold it by the suffrages of the people. She bound herself by the most sacred oaths never to attempt the re-establishment of arbitrary power; and at last, sacrificing the love of royalty to conjugal affection, yielded the crown to her husband, who was chosen king by the States, and mounted the throne on the same conditions as his royal consort.

Baron Görtz was taken into custody immediately after the death of Charles, and condemned by the Senate of Stockholm to lose his head at the foot of the common gallows,—an act of revenge, perhaps, rather than of justice, and a cruel insult to the memory of a king whom Sweden still admires.